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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XVIII, Issue No. 16 | WEDNESDAY JANUARY 16, 2008 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you think it is time that Saipan enacted an anti-animal cruelty statute?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Bike Bomb

A bomb planted on a motorbike killed at least nine people and wounded 52 others in Karachi.

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Bush in Saudi

Bush delivered a sophisticated weapons sale for Saudi Arabia on Monday.

WORLD...Page 16

UFO Sighting

In Texas, residents are abuzz over reported sightings of what many believe is a UFO.

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NMI gets $10M Interior grant for CIPs. PAGE 2

2007 posts 10.6 percent drop in arrivals. PAGE 3

Misused $6.4M uncollected in '07

By AGNES E. DONATO
agnes_donato@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Attorney General's Office and other government agencies did nothing in the first half of 2007 to recover some $6.4 million in misused funds.

The Office of the Public Auditor reported that it received no updates from the AGO and other responsible agencies on the status of the recovery of the funds.

As of June 30, 2007, audit

FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

Governor reports balanced budget

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial has reported a balanced budget for the second year in a row.

The governor told the Legislature that the CNMI government achieved a small surplus of $14,000 in fiscal year 2007, which ended

Pula, DOI officials tour power plant

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Office of Insular Affairs director Nikolao Pula and some local Interior Department officials toured Power Plant 1 in Lower

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Local

NMI gets $10M Interior grant for CIPs

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The Fitial administration yesterday announced the approval of a $10-million grant for capital improvement projects in the Commonwealth.

The grant funds include $3.7 million for the Puerto Rico dump closure, $1.7 million for the Kagman wastewater treatment plant project, and $2.3 million for Saipan water infrastructure projects.

Some $1.285 million each is also provided for the Tinian landfill and for Rota's ecotourism program.

Press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr. said the governor secured the funding in a meeting in the governor's conference room yesterday morning with Nikolao Pula, director of the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial shakes hands with Nikolao Pula, director of the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs, after signing the agreement for a $10 million Interior Department grant for approved CIP projects at the Governor's Conference Room on Capital Hill yesterday.

The newly installed presiding officers of the 16th Legislature—House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios and Senate President Pete P. Reyes—were also present at the meeting.

Reyes also reported that Fitial and Pula had a dinner meeting Monday evening.

Pula arrived on Saipan on Monday. The first item on his itinerary was the oath-taking ceremony for the new Legislature. But the main purpose of his two-day visit was to meet with Fitial and other CNMI officials regarding capital improvement grants and other issues.

"I plan to return to the CNMI soon to meet with several other folks on a variety of issues after this trip," Pula said.

He is headed next to Pohnpei to meet with President Emanuel Mori and the four governors of the Federated States of Micronesia on Compact Impact issues.

Helicopter squadron aids medical evacs

SANTA RITA, Guam—Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 recently assisted in the medical evacuation of four patients in two separate incidents.

Two MH-60S helicopters were launched from the squadron located on Andersen Air Force Base at approximately 8am Jan. 12. The helicopters arrived at a South Korean bulk carrier, located about 40 miles southwest of Guam, where three patients needed to be treated for injuries. Two crewmembers suffered burn injuries and the third member had several injuries to his foot. When the Navy crew arrived onsite, they hoisted a flight surgeon, corpsman, rescue swimmer, and rescue litters to transport the patients. Navy personnel assessed the patients and transported them safely to the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam landing pad. The patients were then taken to Guam Memorial Hospital.

On Jan. 14, a call came in for a medical evacuation from Rota for a patient that was having breathing problems. The Navy crew was alerted at 1am and departed Andersen Air Force Base at 1:30am. The MH-60S helicopter arrived at Rota International Airport and transported the patient to the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam landing pad. The patient was then transferred to Guam Memorial Hospital. ***(USN)***

Man, teen allegedly assault storeowner

A man and a teenager were arrested for allegedly beating up a businessman inside his store in Dandan Monday morning.

Vincent Muna, 20, of Kagman, and a 17-year-old boy were arrested by responding police officers.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman found probable cause to warrant the arrest of Muna for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and criminal mischief.

Wiseman imposed a $1,000 cash bail plus $900 unsecured bond for Muna's temporary release.

The case against the juvenile was sealed.

A detective told the court that the incident happened at Hi-Mart in Dandan.

The detective said one of the defendants punched the storeowner in the face, causing a struggle. The suspects also allegedly attacked the owner with a metal pipe and a large rock.

Responding police officers arrested the suspects.

Meanwhile, a beautician was arrested for allegedly stealing $1,210 in rental payment that his employer asked him to collect from one of the building tenants.

Mario Besana, 51, was arrested for theft.

At yesterday's hearing, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman imposed a $150 cash bail for Besana's temporary release.

A detective said that on Saturday, the owner of @Hair.Comb Salon in Garapan complained to the police that his employee, Besana, stole money from the company.

The employer stated that on Dec. 30, 2007, he asked Besana to remind one of the tenants of a rental payment that was due on Jan. 2, 2008.

The employer on two occasions asked Besana if he was able to collect the rental, but the defendant stated that the tenant was off island.

On Jan. 11, the employer learned from a friend that the tenant had already paid the rent and that Besana received the money.

The employer obtained the tenant's receipt that was allegedly signed by the beautician. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Local group scores Benedetto

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

The TaoTao Tano CNMI Association is taking issue with Federal Ombudsman James Benedetto, particularly his "outdated and exaggerated reports" to the Interior Department about the CNMI, since it enhances the possible passage of the federalization bill.

In a statement issued Monday, TaoTao Tano president Greg Cruz said the local group disagrees with Benedetto's gathering of data on uncollected monies owed nonresident workers by employers that have either closed down or packed up and left the island.

"The problem with this issue," said Cruz, "is that these employers are foreigners, not locals, and for an irresponsible federal official who has no respect for our government—including blatantly disrespecting the indigenous people with his outdated and exaggerated reports to the Department of Interior—is unjust and unethical."

Benedetto said it was actually the U.S. Congress that asked his office to find out how many workers are owed back wages that have not been paid.

He pointed out that there is money that the Department of Labor has awarded the guest workers, money that the workers have yet to receive.

"And that is what I am doing—to select that information and then make recommendations on how the workers will get paid. If Greg Cruz has a problem with that, he should write to Congress and say 'I don't want you asking those questions' or 'I don't want you getting that information,'" Benedetto said.

He pointed out that Cruz has the right to go to court and collect money that people owe him, "and so do guest workers."

Cruz stated that Benedetto's conduct undermines the local government's ability to address labor complaint issues by itself. "It is unethical and unprofessional for a federal ombudsman to continue coercing nonresident guest workers with labor complaints," he said.

In response, Benedetto said, "It does not diminish Greg Cruz's right for alien workers to exercise their rights. Cruz has a right to express himself and so do alien workers."

Cruz explained that Benedetto is a federal official and that he should have not participated in the Unity March "for it is a direct conflict of interest and misconduct in public office."

Benedetto said that Cruz has a right to express himself just as anybody else has.

2007 posts 10.6-percent drop in arrivals

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands dropped 10.62 percent in calendar year 2007, according to the latest figures from the Marianas Visitors Authority.

From 435,494 visitor arrivals in the January-December period of 2006, figures went down to 389,261 in the same 12 months of 2007.

For the entire 2007, visitor arrivals posted gains in only three months—February, November, and December. November recorded the biggest increase in visitor arrivals at 2.12 percent (31,618 from 30,961), while February and December posted growth of 2.05 percent (37,990 from 37,228) and .59 percent (35,765 from 35,556), respectively.

At a drop of 22.30 percent, September was the dimmest month in terms of visitor arrivals for the Commonwealth, as it saw 6,965 less tourists for the month, from 34,203 in September 2006 to just 27,238 in September 2007.

June was the second worst month with 22.13 percent negative growth (29,989 from 38,510), followed by May and October at 21.89 percent (29,093 from 37,237) and 20.36 (27,238 from 34,203), respectively.

April saw a 20.30-percent decrease in tourist arrivals from 32, 981 to 26,286, while July had a 14.53-percent drop from 39,552 to 33,804.

Fortunately, March, January, and August saw only single-digit declines in tourist arrivals for the Commonwealth.

March saw 6.04 percent less tourists from the same period last year (33,606 from 35,768), while January and August recorded drops of 3.68 percent (38,047 from 39,500) and 1.56 percent (39,573 from 40,201).

During last month's MVA general membership meeting at the Saipan World Resort, board chair Jerry Tan said the CNMI is projected to welcome 468,286 tourists in 2008.

He said the 20-percent increase in tourist arrivals for 2008 is due to the continued growth of its Korean market and an expected rebound of the islands' No. 1 market, Japan. The MVA chairman also sees the Commonwealth market in China and Russia to post positive growth this year.

UMDA plans to build spa at Palms Resort

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

The United Micronesia Development Association is planning to build a spa at its soon to be acquired Hotel Nikko Saipan property.

In an interview last week, the company's director of asset management and chief financial officer Hiroyuki Saito disclosed that UMDA hopes to tap into the highly lucrative market of Japanese and Korean retirees by building a world-class spa at the San Roque landmark, which it intends to rename Palms Resort Saipan.

Saito told the Saipan Tribune that this particular segment has high buying power and are known to frequent destinations that have high-end facilities.

Besides the spa, the company also plans to market Palms Resort Saipan as a hotel for health- and sports-minded individuals, said the UMDA official, who will assume the presidency and CFO posts of the company that will take over Hotel Nikko Saipan (Micronesian Resort, Inc.)

Saito said Micronesian Resort Inc. plans to take advantage of Palms Resort Saipan's proximity to the Marpi area and its uncharted trails and top-notch diving sites like The Grotto.

He also said his company will not neglect the local market as he plans to sponsor walking activities that will benefit the CNMI chapter of the American Red Cross and the CNMI Diabetes Coalition, much like when UMDA used to regularly organize the same kind of events at its old LaoLao Bay Golf Resort property.

Saito earlier said that UMDA is still deliberating which among world-class hoteliers Sheraton, Hilton, Marriott, and Outrigger will manage the Hotel Nikko property.

In an announcement issued Dec. 21, JAL Group and the UMDA agreed to transfer the ownership of Hotel Nikko Saipan, Inc. to UMDA by the end of January 2008.

Under the agreement, UMDA will purchase from JAL Group all of its stocks in Hotel Nikko Saipan, Inc. The hotel premises include a large water park, a wedding chapel facility, restaurants, banquet rooms, tennis courts, racquetball courts, and a botanical garden.

The purchase also includes nearby staff residences (PauPau Terrace), dormitories, and interest in Tropical Laundry & Linen Supply, Co., Ltd.

Closing of the transaction is scheduled to occur on Jan. 31, 2008. Effective upon that date, JAL Hotels Co. Ltd, which currently manages the hotel, shall terminate its management contract.

Emergency declaration for Anatahan extended

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial extended once more the emergency declaration for Anatahan island, which continues to show volcanic activity.

As such, Anatahan is still considered unsafe for human habitation. All travel to the island remains restricted, with the exception of scientific expeditions.

The emergency declaration for Anatahan has been in place since May 13, 2003.

Fitial said the volcanic activity and seismic phenomena, which prompted the declaration in the first place, continues to exist on the island.

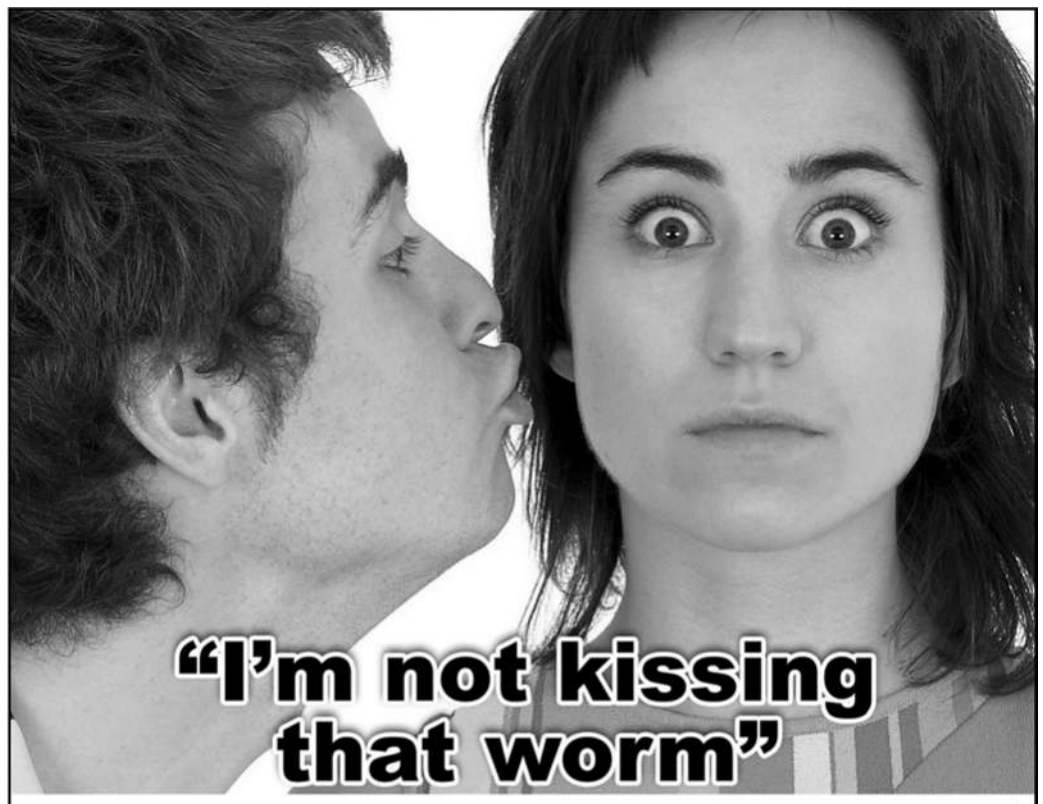
"This extension of emergency shall remain in effect for 30 days, unless the governor shall, prior to the end of the 30-day period, notify the presiding officers of the term, and giving reasons for extending the emergency," Fitial said.

The government will continue enforcing the off-limits zone—from 30 nautical miles to 10 nautical miles around Anatahan island.

Anatahan is a small volcanic island 120 km north of Saipan. The first historical eruption was reported in May 2003. In April 2004, the volcano woke up again after a few months of slumber.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey in its report issued Saturday, seismic activity this week was relatively quiet.

USGS said the increased possibility of vog, or ash emissions, remains. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***



Sure enough, there it was. A microscopic worm living just beneath the surface of Jesse's eye. His only symptom – redness. The thought of that worm undulating like a tiny maggot hula dancer was enough for Carmen to stop kissing Jesse. Marianas Eye Institute's Dr. David Khorram put together the team that extracted the worm using lasers and advanced microsurgical techniques. When the bandage came off, the first thing Jesse got was a juicy kiss from Carmen.

If we can handle Jesse's worm infested eye (and help him get a kiss from Carmen), then surely we can help you, even if you just need glasses. From basic to advanced, we're your place for world-class eye care.

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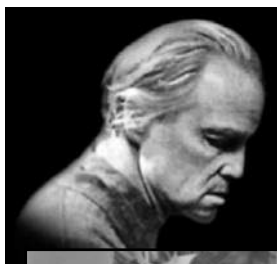
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Three senators fail to get committees

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Three senators were left out in the appointment of committee chairmanships for the 16th Senate.

This is a departure from the senators' practice over the past two years, where each member had his own committee to lead, thereby preventing the existence of a minority bloc.

As announced during the inaugural session on Monday, the nine committees have been distributed to the five members who, along with Senate President Pete P. Reyes, apparently form the new majority in the Upper House.

Vice President Felix Mendiola was designated to serve as chairman of the Committee on Rules and Procedure and the Committee on Federal Relations.

Floor Leader Jude Hofschneider will continue to lead the Committee on Education and Youth. In addition, he will take on the job of chairman of the Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs.

Legislative Secretary Maria Frica Pangelinan is the new chairwoman of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs.

Sen. Paul A. Manglona will head two panels: the Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications, and the Committee on Health, Education and Welfare.

Sen. Paterno Hocog will continue to serve as chairman of the Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law. He will also take over the Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations.

The three Senate members left without a chairmanship are former Senate President Joseph Mendiola and Sens. Luis Crisostimo and Henry San Nicolas.

Fisherman catches rare fish

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

While sitting at the beach behind his uncle Lino Olopai's house in Chalan Kanoa, fisherman Cecillio Raiukiulipiy spotted a strange looking fish jumping in and out of the water.

"I don't know if it was trying to commit suicide or something but I had to go check it out," said Raiukiulipiy.

He raced down the beach and reached down to pick up the fish.

His first reaction was that "it looked very strange. It had a large head and almost no tail," adding that in all his years of fishing, he has never seen one like it.

Raiukiulipiy said he called the Division of Fish & Wildlife to help them identify it.

"We were pouring water on its body to keep it alive. Unfortunately, two hours later, it had already died when photographers were taking pictures. But when it was alive, it had many different colors," said Raiukiulipiy.

DFW fisheries biologist Steven Mckagan identified the fish as *Ranzania laevis*, more commonly referred to as the slender mola or sunfish.

The slender mola is the most colorful and rarest of the ocean sunfishes. They have a smooth and thinner skin and a vertically oriented mouth. Polynesians call the slender molas "King of the Mackerels." To them, it is considered bad luck to catch and kill this particular specie as it would render the mackerel incapable of finding their way to the islands.

According to Mckagan, DFW has received only two reports of sunfish sightings in the last 10 years.

"The one brought in last week was reportedly part of a school of 20 or more," said Mckagan.

He said the slender molas typically spawn around the Hawaiian Islands but are found in most warm tropical waters.

"Their maximum size is about 80cm so this one appears to be an adult. Other sunfish, such as the 'Mola mola', get up to 10 feet in length," said McKagan.

Raiukiulipiy said he has gone fishing in all of Micronesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and never in all his years of fishing has he ever come across one so unique as the slender mola.

McKagan said DFW has an ongoing checklist program, in which they document all of the fish species observed in the CNMI.

"Fishermen have also played a role in advancing our checklist in recent years by bringing in obscure bottom fish," said McKagan.

For more information, visit http://www.dfw.gov.mp/fisheries/fresearch/fresfs.htm.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Cecillo Raiukiulipiy shows off the strange looking fish that he found on a beach fronting Lino Olopai's residence in Chalan Kanoa late Thursday afternoon. The fish was turned over to the Division of Fish and Wildlife for diagnostics on Friday.

MISUSED

From Page 1

recommendations in 13 audit reports were referred to the AGO for legal action to recover improperly expended funds. According to these audit reports, some $2.7 million is potentially recoverable. This includes about $1.3 million in overpayments of professional services contracts, and $1.1 million from the Tinian gaming commission.

OPA identified potential recoveries of another $4.6 million in eight audit reports to various agencies. Of the $4.6 million, $950,000 has been partially recovered, leaving a balance of $3.7 million as still potentially recoverable.

Nearly $3 million of this amount is due from the defunct Marianas Public Lands Authority, which failed to collect rentals from quarry operators from 1990 to 1995. The $3.7 million also includes about half a million dollars of unpaid nonresident worker application fees that the Department of Labor has yet to recover from two companies.

OPA issues a report on CNMI agencies' implementation of audit recommendations every six months. The latest report covers the period as of June 30, 2007.

For the first six months of 2007, OPA tracked a total of 60 audit recommendations. Of the 60 recommendations, one was closed. This means OPA was satisfied with the action taken by the concerned agency in relation to the audit recommendation.

This case involves the Department of Commerce, which implemented OPA's recommendation to address the security of CNMI government deposits. It was done by requiring all banks and financial institutions holding deposits of CNMI government and autonomous agencies to furnish the Banking Division with evidence and a certification that such deposits are being properly secured with bank assets.

The 59 other recommendations remained either open or resolved. Either the agencies involved have not taken any action to satisfy the audit recommendations, or they cannot take immediate action, but have established a reasonable plan and time frame for action.

Fifty of the open or resolved recommendations are delinquent, or have been outstanding for at least 180 days.

Agencies with delinquent recommendations as of June 30, 2007 include the AGO, Department of Finance, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Department of Public Lands, NMI Retirement Fund, Northern Marianas College, and the Department of Labor.

GOVERNOR

From Page 1

on Sept. 30, 2007.

Based on unaudited information, revenue collections and other financing sources totaled $163.13 million. This is $155,000 less than projected and $33.5 million less than the previous year.

Recorded expenditures and obligations totaled $163.116 million.

According to Fitial, the balanced budget was achieved as a result of refinancing existing bond debt, which lowered debt service requirements. He also noted that austerity Fridays were implemented and expenditures were strictly controlled throughout the fiscal year.

Furthermore, payroll expenditures were significantly reduced because of the suspension of employer contributions to the NMI Retirement Fund.

"These measures combined enabled the CNMI government to manage the effects of the $33.5-million revenue reduction from the previous year," Fitial said.

The governor said the decreased business gross revenue tax collection was a major factor in the overall budgetary performance last year. BGRT collections fell $4.2 million below projection. Other tax categories also posted collections that were lower than projected: excise taxes, $1.096 million; income taxes, $1.944 million; and wage and salary taxes, $1.070 million.

Hospital charges for services were also $1.5 million less than projected.

The reduced collections were offset by a $4.7 million reduction in debt service requirements, which came as a result of refinancing existing general fund debt at favorable interest rates.

Fitial noted that obligations and expenditures were about $170,000 less than the allotments issued. He said this would not have happened if the FY2007 budget law was not amended.

"If the funding level for FY2007 had remained at the [Public Law] 15-28 level of $193.5 million, total expenditures and obligations would have exceeded actual resources, and would have resulted in a deficit for the year of approximately $30.3 million. Enactment of P.L. 15-71 provided the basis for completing FY2007 with a small surplus," he said.

The governor said FY2008 may continue to be financially difficult for the CNMI government, based on the declining tax collections and other economic indicators. But there is cause for hope, he added.

"I am optimistic about economic recovery, fueled by new investments that have recently been committed such as the Kumho Asiana Laulau project, health and education industry, as well as potential collateral benefits that will accrue to the CNMI from the proposed military buildup in Guam, among others," Fitial said.

PULA

From Page 1

Base yesterday afternoon to see how CUC is using the $6.5 million grant that Interior gave to rehabilitate the plant's engines.

Lt. Gov. Timothy Villagomez and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Anthony C. Guerrero joined Pula at the meeting.

CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis told *Saipan Tribune* that the first part of the meeting focused on the five major firms working at the power plant to bring more generation on line. The projects, according to Mathis, will make the engines more reliable and greatly help the commercial/business sector on the island.

"Once stable, the issue of generation turns to an issue of what could become available for the long term—whether new units or whether forms of alternative energy," she said.

The CUC spokesperson said much of the conversation turned to this topic and whether there are and how to locate reliable alternative energy firms that are not experiencing development problems and that may not take up huge land parcels—of which Saipan cannot offer.

Guerrero reportedly told the Interior officials that CUC's request for proposals for alternate energy is progressing, although those in the traditional energy fields appear to be "threatened" by the process.

Mathis said the concept is one where "you build it and run it and we'll buy the energy."

"Certainly reliable power—both as an interim fix on existing generation estimated at $13 million—of which we have $6.5 million—and the issue of longer term replacements come with a price tag," she said.

Mathis said they advised Pula that the question is ultimately about replacing the power engines, the need for which is serious and urgent. It takes a minimum of two years to order and have new units delivered.

Mathis said in the recent economist.com rate/generation study, the cost to replace the engine comes at $40 million, at least for a few units. More realistically, the dollar figure comes in at $70 million for real development.

"Clearly the CNMI has no resources for this," she said.

Mathis said the other discussion focused on performance management contracts—a type of public/private management and maintenance for generation plants, which has been successful in Guam.

Pula and the DOI party toured the power plant to witness where the federal dollars are going for the major overhauls, the parts, and the status of the plant and why new generation remains a longer term issue.

"I'm overwhelmed," Mathis quoted Pula as saying.

She said Pula stated that the tour answered all of his questions and suggested that the 16th Legislature should see what he saw.

Using the $6.5 million CIP funds, CUC said more than 19 contracts have been signed and five major firms hired.

One 7 megawatt unit is slated to return to production in the first week of March and another unit is slated for production by the end of March.

'Copper wire thieves deserve substantial prison time'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman said substantial prison penalties await copper wire thieves for engaging in "these reckless and senseless criminal activities."

Wiseman said it is his position that the deterrence, retribution and incapacitation factors of sentencing should be of the utmost consideration, with a strong message to potential copper wire thieves and other offenders that he will impose significant prison terms if they commit these crimes.

The judge underscored the need for substantial prison terms versus copper wire thieves during yesterday's sentencing of Simon Sebuu.

Wiseman ordered Sebuu to spend the maximum one year in prison for theft and the maximum one year for criminal mischief. The sentences shall run consecutively. Sebuu was given credit for the 27 days that he has already served in jail. This means that Sebuu will spend two years in prison, minus 27 days.

Wiseman remanded him to the Department of Corrections.

The judge also ordered Sebuu to pay restitution in an amount to be determined by the court. He required the defendant to pay a $100 court assessment fee.

The court found Sebuu guilty of theft and criminal mischief in August 2007.

At yesterday's sentencing, Wiseman noted that Sebuu has two pending criminal cases: one for theft and another for disturbing the peace.

In addition, the judge said, Sebuu was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol and driving while unlicensed in October 2007. He served a five-day prison sentence and was placed on probation for a year.

"There has been rampant activities in this community involving the theft of copper wire from many public facilities as well as from private or commercial places," Wiseman said.

In Sebuu's case, he said the defendant stole copper wire from a daycare center, a place that provides services and facilities "for the precious children of this community."

Wiseman said when someone dismantles copper wire from a building, residence or a public way or utility, the magnitude of the repercussions from such act is widespread.

"For example, lighting of the Beach Road pathway or providing light and air conditioning for a daycare center's facility, a residence, a commercial building, a water pump used to distribute water to the community. Such facilities cease to operate as a result of such acts," he pointed out.

These, the judge said, are just a few of the repercussions such senseless crimes cause.

Wiseman said the impact on the persons affected and on the community is severe and the end for which Sebuu committed this crime for was a paltry $24.

"I believe that this case will represent one of the few copper wire theft cases where the one responsible will spend a significant amount of jail time," Wiseman said.

Sebuu was charged with burglary, theft, and criminal mischief for burglarizing the Little Angels Day Care in Koblerville.

The jury acquitted the defendant of burglary. But Wiseman found him guilty of theft and criminal mischief.

Pete A. talks of federalization's impact at SHRM meeting

The Society for Human Resource Management-CNMI Chapter will be holding its first general membership meeting of the year tomorrow, Jan. 17, 2008, with Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio as guest speaker.

Tenorio is expected to speak to the Chapter on federalization and its impact on the CNMI. "Tenorio will provide informative insight on the influence federalization will have on our ailing economy. This controversial issue could change affect many lives in the CNMI," said the Chapter in a statement.

The group will also install its 2008 board of directors and officers at the luncheon meeting.

The meeting will be held at Charley's Cabaret, Pacific Islands Club on Thursday, Jan. 17, 2008. Doors open at 11:15 for registration. Cost for members is $15 and $20 for non-SHRM members. Lunch is included (government P/O accepted). Reservations are required.

Individuals interested in attending this meeting should contact the following: Tommy Kennington at phone number 234-7976, fax number 235-7789, email at hr@picsaipan.com; Frannie T. Salas at email francestsalas@gmail.com; or Polly Deleon Guerrero at pdlguerrero@mymarianas.com. ***(SHRM)***

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Slyvette	V014	1/5 Sat	1/10 Thu	1/21 Mon	1/10 Thu	1/5 Sat	12/29 Sat	1/13 Sun	1/14 Mon	1/13 Sun	1/16 Wed	1/5 Sat	1/6 Sun	1/11 Fri	1/12 Sat	1/17 Thu	1/19 Sat	SKIP	1/23 Wed	1/25 Fri	1/26 Sat	1/29 Tue
Haneburg	V028	1/12 Sat	1/17 Thu	1/28 Mon	1/17 Thu	1/12 Sat	1/5 Sat	1/20 Sun	1/21 Mon	1/20 Sun	1/23 Wed	1/12 Sat	1/13 Sun	1/18 Fri	1/19 Sat	1/24 Thu	1/26 Sat	1/29 Tue	1/30 Wed	2/1 Fri	2/2 Sat	2/5 Tue
Stadt Hamburg	V011	1/19 Sat	1/24 Thu	2/4 Mon	1/24 Thu	1/19 Sat	1/12 Sat	1/27 Sun	1/28 Mon	1/27 Sun	1/30 Wed	1/19 Sat	1/20 Sun	1/25 Fri	1/26 Sat	1/31 Thu	2/2 Sat	SKIP	2/6 Wed	2/8 Fri	2/9 Sat	2/12 Tue
Slyvette	V015	1/26 Sat	1/31 Thu	2/11 Mon	1/31 Thu	1/28 Mon	1/19 Sat	2/3 Sun	2/4 Mon	2/3 Sun	2/6 Wed	1/25 Fri	1/7 Mon	2/1 Fri	2/2 Sat	2/7 Thu	2/9 Sat	2/12 Tue	2/13 Wed	2/15 Fri	2/16 Sat	2/19 Tue
Haneburg	V029	2/2 Sat	2/7 Thu	2/18 Mon	2/7 Thu	2/4 Mon	1/26 Sat	2/10 Sun	2/11 Mon	2/10 Sun	2/13 Wed	2/1 Fri	1/14 Mon	2/8 Fri	2/9 Sat	2/14 Thu	2/16 Sat	SKIP	2/20 Wed	2/22 Fri	2/23 Sat	2/26 Tue
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Environment groups map out conservation plan

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ
CORRESPONDENT

Earlier this year, the CNMI resource agencies, through the directors of Division of Fish and Wildlife, Coral Resource Management Office and Division of Environmental Quality, accepted an invitation by The Nature Conservancy and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to participate in a Conservation Action Planning process.

The CAP tool has been introduced to create partnerships between government and non-government agencies throughout Micronesia. This will be the first time a CAP will be used in the CNMI.

The first CAP workshop will begin today, Jan. 16, 2008, and will run through Saturday, Jan. 19, 2008, at the Pacific Islands Club, from 8am to 4pm.

The CAP process is a tool to assist island teams to comprehensively analyze biological, social, economic and other factors at their conservation sites, and then develop and assess strategic conservation actions to preserve or improve biodiversity, abate critical threats, and build local capacity for conservation.

The Coral Reef Initiative Policy Committee has chosen Laulau Bay as the highest priority conservation site on Saipan. The CAP process will result in a vision and a 3-5 year conservation plan for the area.

The CAP workshop this week will identify an interdisciplinary planning team composed of key stakeholders such as resource management agency personnel, local non-government organization staff, and community leaders who will be involved in work at Laulau Bay conservation area.

From this planning team, a team of three to five individuals will be chosen to participate in a Micronesia-wide CAP group workshop. The membership of the CNMI CAP team will include someone to learn the CAP process and coordinate follow-up with the larger interdisciplinary planning team in the CNMI, a "site manager" or person with the lead responsibility for implementing the conservation strategies at Laulau Bay, a local scientist, the lead agency director and a local leader with influence in the government and community to assist the site manager in developing and implementing the conservation strategy.

So far only the Division of Fish & Wildlife director, Sylvan Igisomar, has been identified to be part of the CNMI CAP team.

In March 2008, the identified core team will attend a Micronesia-wide workshop in Chuuk. Teams from across the region will participate in a five-day workshop to share their CAPs and to receive feedback from each other and a technical resource team.

People interested in attending the workshop can contact Fran Castro at 664-8500 or coralreefpoc@gmail.com. The number of attendees is limited, for there are a few slots still available.

Angelo Villagomez is the executive director of MINA.

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Taotao Tano sets meeting on NMI federalization bill

The Taotao Tano CNMI Association Inc. is calling for an urgent meeting today with all indigenous Chamorro and Carolinian descents to discuss the pending federal legislation H.R. 3079, which seeks to impose federal control over local immigration. The meeting is at 7pm.

The group, which describes itself as a social advocacy organization, says that H.R. 3079 is an unjust piece of legislation that "will take away our local control of our labor and immigration in our homeland."

"Our continued silence on this unjust federal legislation will have a negative affect," said Gregorio Cruz, president of the organization.

"We encourage and humbly ask each of you to attend and join in uniting our island and its local indigenous people under one spirit, one heart and one voice of our true message to our local leaders and the federal government, concerning this critical piece of legislation that will adversely affect us," he added.

For more information contact Cruz at 256-2325 or Diego at 288-6146. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MMAC committee meeting today

The Marianas March Against Cancer Committee is inviting all committee members or their representatives to attend the MMAC Committee meeting today, Jan. 16, 2008, at 12pm, at Pierre's Restaurant in Garapan. Important information will be discussed at the meeting. For more information, e-mail Chris A. Concepcion at chrisaconcepcion@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

San Antonio Bingo Spectacular

The San Antonio Parish Council will be hosting a "Bingo Spectacular" fundraising event this Sunday, Jan. 20, 2008, from 1pm until around 5pm. This event will be held at the San Antonio Parish Social Hall.

Tickets for Bingo Spectacular are on sale at the Parish Office for $20 each. About $1,000 cash prizes will be given away and plenty of other door prizes are up for grabs. Come one come all.

SSHS Q2 report cards

To all parents/legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School students: The 2nd Quarter report card is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 17, 2008 from 4pm to 7pm. Parents will pick up report cards from the Counseling Office. ***(PR)***

MHS calendar of events

Jan. 16, Report Card distribution/Open House 4pm to 6pm (Please pick up report cards from Homeroom Teachers)
MHS Campus (Students will be released at 1:00pm)
Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day (no classes)

For questions and concerns contact 237-3206. ***(PR)***

Important dates for NMC's Spring 2008 semester

English Placement Test:
- 01/16/08, 5pm-8pm, Rm. A9
- 01/18/08, 1pm-4pm, Rm. A9

LATE Registration for Spring 2008, 01/19/08, 9am – 12pm
First Day of Instruction, 01/22/08
Last Day to Withdraw from Courses, 03/07/08
Last Day of Instruction, 05/10/08

For more information, contact the Office of Admission and Records at 234-5498 Ext. 1540. ***(NMC)***

Hopwood Junior High events

Jan. 17, PTSA meeting in the school's cafeteria from 6pm to 7pm
Jan. 21, Dr. Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
Feb. 4-5, School-level Professional Development Days (no classes)

WSR Elementary January events

Jan. 16, PTSA Meeting, 6pm, WSR cafeteria
Jan. 18, 2nd Quarter Awards Ceremony
Jan. 19, Saturday Reading Program, 8am to 10am/10am to 12pm (breakfast and lunch provided)
Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day (no classes)
Jan. 22, STUCO meeting, 2:30pm, Room D-5
Jan. 23, Nov/Dec/Jan Diners Club (2nd and 3rd grade in charge), Pizza Night fundraising
Jan. 26, NJHS Induction Ceremony (details TBA later)
Saturday Reading Program, 8am to 10am/10am to 12pm (breakfast and lunch provided)
Jan. 29, Spelling Bee finals, 2:30pm, WSR cafeteria
Jan. 30, Half-day (Teacher Professional Development Day

The WSR Library will be open from 9am to 4pm from Jan. 2 to Jan. 9. Students and parents are encouraged to come to the library and borrow books and use the resources. ***(PR)***

Council launches online forum on Article 12

The NMI Council for the Humanities is inviting the public to participate in an online forum on Article XII of the CNMI Constitution pertaining to land ownership.

Article XII stipulates that the acquisition and permanent and long-term interest in real property within the Commonwealth shall be restricted to persons of Northern Marianas Descent.

Section 805 of the Covenant requires the Commonwealth to maintain this land alienation provision for 25 years following the termination of the Trusteeship.

This mandatory 25-year period will end in 2011. After that date, the Commonwealth may continue, alter, or suspend Article XII as it sees fit.

According the Council's executive director, Paz C. Younis, the forum does not support any particular position but rather is intended to facilitate community discussions on land ownership from a variety of perspectives. Dr. Elizabeth D. Rechebei will serve as the forum moderator.

The forum is a component of a Council project titled "Article XII: Intent, Interpretations and Implications" supported in part by a "We the People" grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Younis said that other project components will include a series of panel discussions on Article XII on the John Gonzales Live television show and in various schools, an online publication containing essays on land ownership written by local authors, and a series of lectures by experts on early land tenure patterns in Micronesia in the Northern Marianas and other parts of the Pacific.

Individuals interested in participating in the forum or reading what others have to say on this important constitutional issue are invited to visit the forum on the Council's website at www.nmihumanities.org. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Julie Camacho, winner of the Miller Lite "Choose Your Bike" promo, tries out the Yamaha Cruiser V Star Classic with Pacific Trading Co. general manager Charles Cepeda at Joe's Bar and Grill.

Miller Lite drinker wins a new Yamaha Cruiser

It was a stroke of luck for Miller Lite beer drinker Julie Camacho, who won for herself a brand new Yamaha Cruiser V Star Classic.

Camacho was among the seven semi-finalists to vie for the Yamaha motorbike through the Miller Lite "It's your call. Choose your bike" promo, a three-month islandwide ad campaign.

To become a finalist, one had to buy a 12-pack Miller Lite Beer at any participating store to receive an entry form, which must be filled out and dropped at Miller Lite drop boxes.

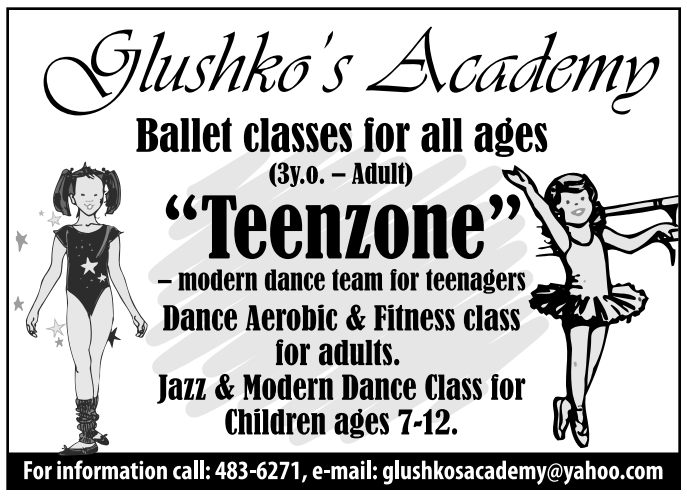
After all the entries were collected, Miller Lite chose seven semifinalists at Joe's Bar & Grill. Each participant was given unique keys. The winning key was supposed to start the bike.

The event was heart pounding to the very end. Each one had their turn and it was not until when Camacho inserted her key into the ignition that the bike started, prompting a storm of applause and a roar from the audience.

Camacho had a choice of two bikes: a Yamaha Cruiser V Star Classic or the Yamaha Sports. Camacho chose the Yamaha Cruiser V Star Classic to top off her years of drinking Miller Lite Beer.

Camacho said she went through great lengths just to get a chance at winning the bike. She bought Miller Lite beer by the cases and 80 rounds of Miller Lite at Joe's Bar & Grill.

Camacho was picked as the seventh finalist during the final draw held at Joe's Bar & Grill. The other six finalists included Dennis Cortez, Vicente Lizama, Audie Maratita, Hazel Teregeyo, Lucky D. Hong and Jerome Reyes. ***(Rianne Pangelinan-Brown)***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Scientist finds surprise hidden in Pacific

University of Texas at Dallas geoscientist Dr. Robert J. Stern and former master's student Neil Basu were part of a research team that discovered and studied an extinct underwater volcano near the southern Mariana islands, near Guam, in the western Pacific Ocean.

The volcano lies more than 300 meters below the ocean surface and contains a large volcanic depression, or caldera, that is comparable in size to better-known examples Krakatoa (Indonesia) and Crater Lake, Ore.

It was named "West Rota Volcano" because of its proximity to the island of Rota in the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The results of the research were published in a recent edition of the scientific journal The Island Arc.

"We knew there was submarine volcano there since the early 1980s, but we didn't know that it had a huge caldera," Stern said.

"It was really exciting to explore the caldera walls with modern ROV technology."

Dating techniques indicate that the volcano began growing more than 300,000 years ago and that the climactic, caldera-forming eruption occurred 37,000-51,000 years ago.

Stern and Basu, now with Pioneer NRC, worked with U.S. and Japanese scientists during three research cruises aboard U.S. and Japanese research vessels that studied the volcano between 2001 and 2005.

The research team used modern shipboard sonar swath-mapping techniques to map the volcano and tethered seafloor robots known as ROVs to examine and sample the volcano.

The research team also discovered significant mineralization in the caldera walls.

"Finding the massive sulfide deposits was an added bonus," Stern said. ***(University of Texas at Dallas)***

$5M litigation tech center contract awarded

AUSTIN, TX (Marketwire)—IE Discovery, a leading provider of Discovery Management solutions, was awarded a $5 million contract to establish a government-owned and contractor-operated Litigation Technology Service Center to support U.S. Attorneys throughout the United States.

The center will be located in Columbia, South Carolina and support U.S. Attorney Offices in all 94 judicial districts in over 200 geographically dispersed sites within the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

"IE Discovery has a lot of experience developing and managing Litigation Technology Service Centers," said Chris May, CEO of IE Discovery. "We believe that our success building Centers for the Unites States Navy was one of the key factors that lead to our selection."

The contract, awarded by the Executive Office for United States Attorneys, calls for IE Discovery to provide comprehensive Discovery Management services to all US Attorneys' Offices, assisting prosecutors and other USA staff in acquiring, organizing, analyzing, developing, preserving, and presenting both paper and electronic records. Specifically, IE Discovery will be responsible for services including scanning of paper records, e-file processing, OCRing, Bates-stamping, automatic and manual coding, de-duplication, key-wording and culling, and hosting litigation document collections.

"IE Discovery offers a complete range of Discovery Management services, and this was important to EOUSA," said Patrick McColloch, IE Discovery's Director of Government Programs. "We look forward to helping the U.S. Attorneys to manage their caseloads more effectively and efficiently."

The contract includes a one-year base agreement with options for two additional years and contemplates the LTSC growing in size from approximately 5,000 square feet to 15,000-20,000 square feet in later years. United States Attorneys conduct most of the trial work in which the US is a party including prosecution of criminal cases brought by the Federal government, prosecution and defense of civil cases in which the US is a party and the collection of debts owed to the Federal government.

IE Discovery provides comprehensive Discovery Management and other litigation support services to corporate law departments, outside counsel, and government agencies who routinely manage complex, information-intensive litigation. Utilizing technological and legal expertise, IE Discovery helps clients improve their productivity and cost efficiency, and more accurately predict their litigation expenditures. IE Discovery is based in Austin, Texas, with offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. For additional information, visit www.iediscovery.com.

USCG searching for downed aviator off Kauai

HONOLULU—U.S. Coast Guard air and surface crews continue to search waters seven miles south of Lihue International Airport on Kauai for the pilot of a twin-engine Beechcraft 1900, which was last reported in that position at 5:08 a.m. Monday.

The 38-year-old male pilot was the only person aboard the Beechcraft, which was last seen on radar 100 feet above the ocean's surface. The pilot was carrying cargo on a regularly scheduled flight.

Coast Guard air crews flew five different sorties during the day on a search which has now encompassed more than 100 square miles. In addition, the crew of the 87-foot patrol boat Kittiwake has been on scene since 9am and has recovered debris from the downed plane.

The Kittiwake—and a 25-foot SAFE boat from Station Kauai—recovered small pieces of the Beechcraft's fuselage and at least 15 mailbags. The plane was contracted to carry U.S. mail.

Mail bags recovered from downed Beechcraft. U.S. COAST GUARD

The Beechcraft left Honolulu International Airport at 4:30am Monday morning, and was to have landed in Lihue less than an hour later. The Coast Guard first spotted debris at 8:50am in a position seven miles south of the airport.

The 225-foot buoy tender Walnut has been diverted to assist in the search and will join the Kittiwake on search patterns through the night. In addition, an HH-65 Dolphin helicopter is being re-fueled at Lihue and will search overnight.

Coast Guard crews report the on-scene weather as challenging and worsening through the day, with wind from the northeast at greater than 25 knots and seas of almost 20 feet in the Kauai Channel. The water temperature is 74 degrees and air temperatures ranged between the upper 60s and low 70s.

"We have narrowed the search area considerably and will work quickly this afternoon and through the night," said Petty Officer 1st Class Kevin Conroy, a search and rescue controller with the Coast Guard's Joint Rescue Coordination Center in Honolulu. "Our search patterns account for the strong winds, currents and seas and we are confident we have brought as many search assets to bear as possible." ***(USCG)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 16, 2001

Group urges use of tobacco funds in fight vs. smoking

An official of an independent health foundation yesterday urged the CNMI government to use the tobacco settlement fund to carry out a comprehensive prevention and education campaign against tobacco consumption on the islands. Dr. M. Lyndon Haviland, Executive Vice President of the Washington-based American Legacy Foundation, said there is a need to use the fund only to implement a comprehensive tobacco control program that will address the enormous health and social costs associated with tobacco consumption.

HS students prepare for college level art course

A selected group of Marianas High School students are currently working to get a head start in their future college careers through the Advanced Placement program which introduces them to the demands of a college level work load. MHS Fine Arts Department Chair Dorothy Haws said the 20-student class pioneers the entire CNMI's secondary block in this landmark project to prepare high school students cope with the rigors of university life.

Growth of small businesses pushed

The Commonwealth Development Authority and the Northern Marianas College have agreed to combined efforts in order to facilitate the growth of economic activities in the Northern Marianas through the increased participation of small businesses. Under the current setup, which is more of an informal partnership between the two agencies, NMC's Small Business Development Center provides the necessary counseling and consultation for hopeful local entrepreneurs while CDA provides the needed capital to start up a business.

JANUARY 16, 2002

Consortium eyes casino on Saipan

Despite the Constitutional ban on gambling, talks about the establishment of a casino on Saipan is being revived with the entry of a group of American, Japanese and Korean investors who are reportedly eyeing Saipan as a possible site for such a project. This was learned after a group of American, Japanese and Korean investors led by Dr. Benjamin L. Armstrong paid House Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider and Sen. Pete P. Reyes a courtesy visit yesterday morning.

Shoreline waste to be shipped off-island

Acting Public Works Secretary John S. Reyes yesterday said the department has already negotiated with a private company for the planned off-island shipment of hazardous waste dumped at the Tanapag shoreline. He disclosed that funds are available to go ahead with the project. But due to limited funding, Reyes said the department would only have part of the stockpile of automotive batteries shipped at once, while the remaining waste would have to be temporarily relocated away from the shore.

CPA negotiates jet fuel depot on Tinian

Negotiations between the Commonwealth Ports Authority and Mobil Oil Marianas resumed for the possible construction of a jet fuel depot on Tinian, in time for the opening of the island's international air transport facility in October this year. CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas met with Mobil Oil Marianas President and Country Manager Abi Adigun last week to discuss plans for a jet fuel bulk plant on Tinian, as completion of the West Tinian International Airport runway expansion project nears.

JANUARY 16, 2003

Govt on edge of financial abyss

With some $12 million in payroll expenses every month, the $12 to $13 million in revenue that the government earns monthly goes in large part toward meeting payroll costs, leaving barely a few thousands to run the CNMI government. This dismaying reality all the more underscores the need for the government to cut costs wherever possible and it has already mapped out a three-pronged course of action: to maintain current expenditure controls, implement additional belt-tightening measures, and generate more revenue for the government.

Thank you for making the holidays brighter!

Mrs. Margaret Keene-Villagomez and the Committees for the Northern Mariana Islands Official Christmas Tree, Roadside Christmas Light Sculptures and Christmas Toy Drive thank the following businesses and individuals for their generous donations and support.

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Best wishes to all in the New Year!

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XVIII, Issue No. 16

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

John Pangelinan PUBLISHER
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EDITORIAL

Beating the superbug

The staph superbug known as MRSA has been around a long time. But only a few months ago was it revealed that the antibiotic-resistant bacterium has spread beyond the occasional hospital and now kills more Americans than AIDS. Rather than fomenting panic, this knowledge should provoke us to take a long-overdue look at hospital procedures, pharmaceutical development and even farming methods.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in October that methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus seriously sickened more than 94,000 Americans in 2005 and almost 19,000 died, making it far more common and dangerous than previously believed. By comparison, 17,000 Americans died of AIDS-related causes that year. Though most infections still occur in hospitals, close to 15 percent are simply "out there," especially in locker rooms, gyms, prisons and tattoo parlors. In November, another study found that the number of hospitalizations from MRSA had more than doubled in six years.

We know a lot more about how to combat MRSA than we did about AIDS in the early years, and we have far more weapons at our disposal, some of them laughably simple and cheap. Like everyday soap. Certain powerful antibiotics can still kill an infection.

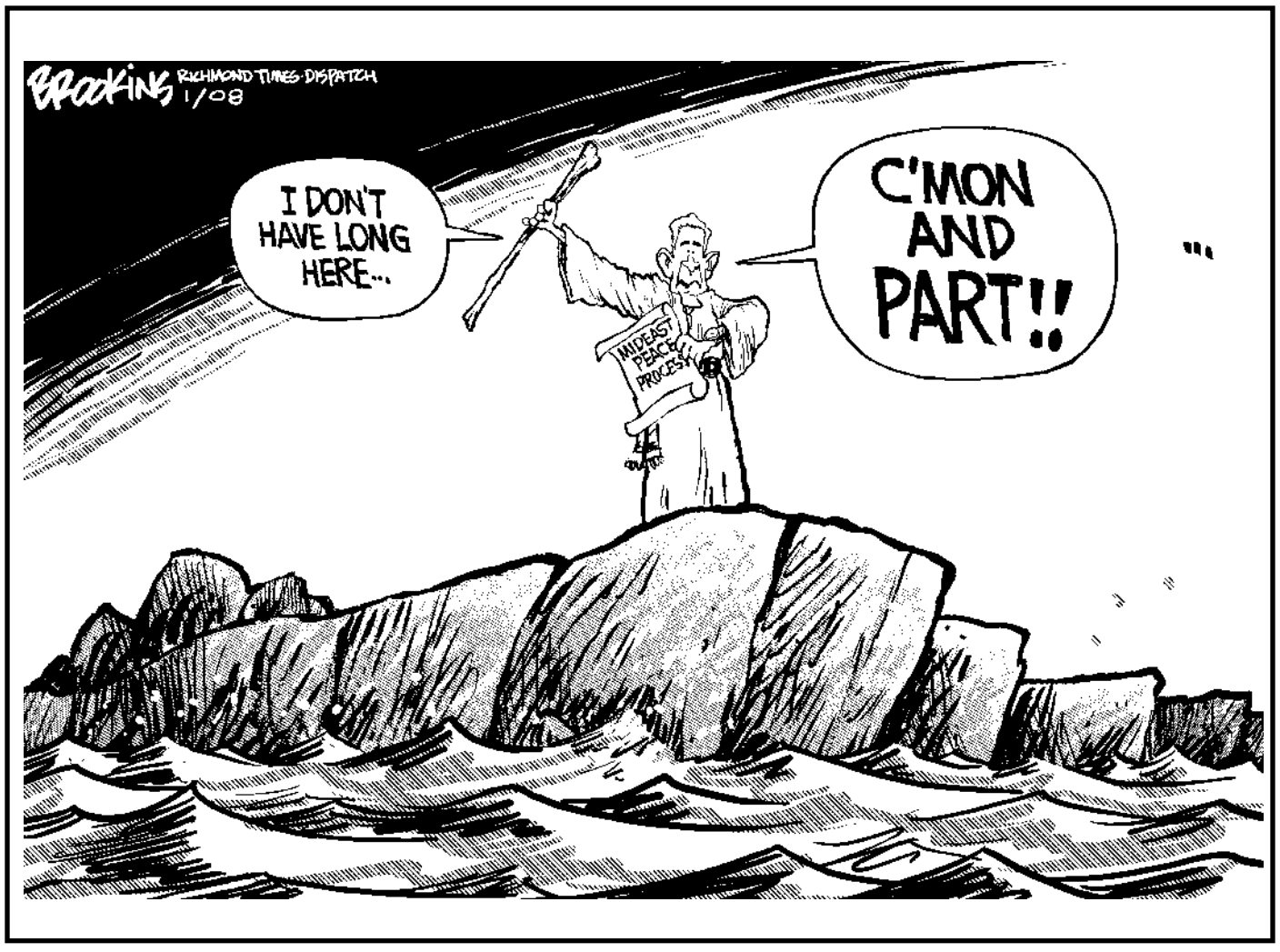
But, with a few exceptions, hospitals and public agencies have been slow to gear up against MRSA. More than 30 studies have shown, for example, that health-care workers wash their hands about half as often as they're supposed to, even though washing before and after seeing each patient would drastically cut down on infection rates. Hospital surfaces and equipment aren't cleaned as often as they should be, and careless habits —like touching potentially contaminated surfaces after hands have been washed but before touching the patient—contribute to the spread.

The first order of business should be to get a clear picture of MRSA. Where is it and how prevalent? An upcoming bill by California state Sen. Elaine Alquist, a Santa Clara Democrat, would make MRSA a reportable disease and require hospitals and nursing homes to report their infection rates. In Tennessee, which tracks MRSA, it quickly became the third most common reportable disease in the state, behind chlamydia and gonorrhea. A similar bill was vetoed in 2004 by California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, but the recent news from the CDC should make him rethink his position, despite the almost certain opposition of hospitals.

Testing newly admitted patients also can cut down dramatically on infection rates. Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago began screening patients in its intensive care units in 2005. By isolating infected patients and taking other protective measures, ICU infection rates plummeted by more than half, and in November the hospital expanded its screening program to all new admissions. Alquist's bill would require screening of only the most vulnerable patients, but the results might entice more hospitals to extend testing. The potential benefit in both health and savings is enormous. After an initial investment of about $50,000, the rapid-turnaround screening tests cost $20 to $30 a patient. The cost of treating MRSA patients in California already tops $3 billion a year.

The proliferation of superbugs similar to MRSA is outpacing the development of new antibiotics, which are less profitable for pharmaceutical companies because they're used for a limited time. The federal government should help spur research in

See BEATING on Page 11



Don't let them change you

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT *Creating economic success for the CNMI*

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

Yesterday, I had the good fortune to spend some time with one of Saipan's successful entrepreneurs. As we toured the streets and byways, I was able to see the island through the eyes of a visionary. Empty lots spawned warehouses. Abandoned buildings became thriving enterprises. Eyesores transformed themselves into gems and landmarks.

As we shared our visions for the future, we pondered the practicality and soundness of investing time, energy and hopes into people and communities that often seem resistant at their best, and often hostile, at their worst. We asked ourselves, what drives the people who feel compelled to advocate change? What is the catalyst that keeps them striving when all around them offer resistance or complacency? And what is the reward that validates those strivings?

My friend asked me, "Would it not be better to give up what amounts to often futile efforts to change, and simply sail away into the sunset of personal happiness? To that query, I reply today: "My friend, you are here for a purpose. You are not here to conform to another's perception of what you should or should not be doing. You have always been compelled to do what you do because of an inner drive that does not need outside validation in order to find its value and worth. In other words, 'Don't Let Them Change You.'

One-fifth of man will find ways to suppress the other four
that seems to be their purpose, nothing less, and nothing more
Your mission, on the other hand, is clear beyond all doubt
Despite what men may do, don't let them change what you're about

For happy men must smile, my friend, and gifted men must give
your purpose is to be the change you want the world to live
And activists and advocates must act and raise their voice
for only by example will you give the world a choice

At times you'll think it futile and you'll want to pack it in
When good men choose do nothing is all bad men need to win
For slow it seems a brick a day is how new worlds are made
But with each act of kindness is a new foundation laid

And those of us who comment on the flaws of one man's way
must watch our words for so shall we create our world's delay
The minute that you start to say "that's just the way it is,"
you've lost hope in your world for now you've joined him there in his

The minute that they break you, friend, their side goes up by one
And you become the very thing you say you want undone
As Gandhi said, "an eye for eye leaves everyone quite blind."
Don't let them douse your spirit, fire, beauty, gifts or mind!

And for those visionaries who find themselves in battle with adversaries: It's been shown to some and believed by others that while mankind is essentially good, there is a contingent of about 20 percent (one-fifth) of the population who are here to wreak havoc on the other 80 percent (four-fifths). That small contingent tends to be more vocal in their resistance to positive change. Don't let their ways and words blind you to the beauty, hope, kindness and caring that exist within mankind. Don't adopt equally destructive or selfish ways of being in retaliation or simply to fit in. Maintain the beauty of your spirit, the kindness in your heart and the friendliness in your demeanor, and the hopefulness of your vision. There is no reality save for that which we accept and buy into. So it is only through your eyes that the world can see its kinder, gentler, more prosperous self.

Reciprocity is not a requirement for your conviction, any more than a mirror makes you who you are.

Maintain the reality of who you wish to be and soon your world will reflect and become you.

■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 12 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit. *Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.passionprofit.com*

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Fostering a spirit of cooperation

Editor's Note: The following is the transcript of the speech that Senate President Pete P. Reyes delivered during the inaugural session of the 16th Commonwealth Legislature.

By PETE P. REYES
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pete P. Reyes is the Senate President of the 16th Legislature.

Let me begin by expressing my sincerest thanks and admiration to our outgoing Senate president, Sen. Joseph Mendiola, for his outstanding leadership during the 15th Legislature. During trying times, Sen. Mendiola was able to build consensus where controversy reigned. He did this by respecting the opinions and views of the other members, while at the same time not compromising his own principles. Sen. Mendiola treated each of us with respect and the Senate honors his leadership and how he conducted his business in a professional and courteous manner that fostered cooperation and collaboration.

My objective is to continue this spirit of cooperation during the 16th Legislature and I ask for each member's support in making this a reality. The last two years have truly been a success story under the guidance and direction of Sen. Mendiola despite the many challenges that we faced.

We also know that a more difficult challenge await us in the Commonwealth as we prepare to journey to the next two years. If there's anything that we've learned, it is the fact that we are able—both the Senate and the House of Representatives—to cooperate.

Please allow me to also formally thank my colleagues for electing me to the office of the presidency. It has been 10 years—you can see this on the pictures up on the wall—since the last president of the Senate was from Saipan.

I believe that as our three islands share important this important leadership position it will serve as a symbol of mutual trust and unity that demonstrates commitment to act on best interest of our Commonwealth as a whole, especially through this economic difficult times. I will endeavor to lead with the best interest of our islands in my mind. Furthermore, I ask that we, as members of this Legislature, remain unified toward resolving our islands' economic and social difficulties.

I truly believe that we have some very bright and talented individuals here in the upper house and it is my hope that we put aside any differences and work toward specific and meaningful goals so that we may see real progress in our Commonwealth. While it is unrealistic to expect this new Senate our problems overnight, I am confident that we have the ability to make a significant impact if we are willing to agree on and move with a unified position. We reinforce this theme every inauguration, it is time to put aside any political party agenda and tend to the agenda of the people. Here is where we need to show that we can work together for the common good of our people lest we forget we are elected into office not to make life more difficult for our people, but make it easier.

Our people face difficult time and look to us for answers. Our jobs cannot be easy. Take for instance the never-ending issue, issues we face with CUC. This Senate must endeavor to find a way to solve the problem even if we have to burn the midnight oil to do this. Our solution to this problem is to focus in making our power distribution system both reliable and affordable. I am sure that the chairman of the PUTC will make every effort to see to it that this goal is achieved by the end of the 16th Legislature.

My personal ambition is to find workable and realistic solutions to the problems that have plagued CUC so that our local utility company would provide reliable power at a fair and equitable market price. Our ability to provide basic human needs such as power and water is the backbone of our economy. And if we are to see any progress in our islands, concerns at CUC would need to be addressed. We cannot control the price of fuel but we can make improvements to the way our utility is managed and maintained so that it can operate more efficiently and effectively.

Further, our government retirees face uncertainty about their future. Their pensions are threatened and those who completed the journey and are now in retirement are now unsure if their will be anything left for them after many years of faithful service to us. This Senate will work with the governor and the House of Representatives to assure that responsible board members and Fund administrators will reach common ground to reestablish credibility to the system. We will explore viable recommendations and suggestions and trust that the administration will extend the same effort to the Legislature. Our common economic crisis affects each of us and the Retirement Fund would need to demonstrate its willingness to participate in cost-cutting measures.

The education of our children has always been paramount in my agenda. As it should be, a top priority of all elected officials in the Commonwealth. While it is true that great nations are recognized by their economic and political prosperity, I believe that a nation can only become great when it commits to investing in the education of its children.

Our public school systems has been striving to accomplish a vision and a mission founded on the premise that al children can learn and a quality education can be afforded to all our children. They have endeavored to raise academic achievements and have set certain standards as well as standardized assessment goals. I'm sure than many times it may have seem to PSS and NMC that they were alone in this dream. They are not. They're as much a part of building our economy as any other regular producing agency in our government. They build a skilled and ready workforce. Something that we really need to refocus our efforts on supporting. We will reevaluate our priorities and attend to the business of investing on our children.

While I cannot predict what will happen in the next two years, we can begin by strengthening our relationship with the United States Congress and the federal government to ensure that federal legislations will not have an overly adverse affect on the welfare on the people of the Commonwealth. Section 902 of the Covenant Agreement should always take precedence whenever serious differences occur between the federal government and the CNMI government.

These are about a few of my thoughts as we move into a season I am hopeful will turn into one with more light at the end of this dark tunnel.

Finally, it is my promise that I will work hard in toward seeing that every member is heard and respected during the 16th Legislature. I realize that I don't have all the answers and that each of you brings a unique and valuable perspective that I will rely on as Bishop Camacho said this weekend in the Inaugural Mass, "We must seek wisdom wherever it is found." I'm confident that collectively that we will find this wisdom right here in this chamber and our community and together we can work toward a brighter future for our children.

Again I thank my colleagues for the trust that they have placed on me to lead the Senate and the people that have kept me grounded—my family.

Letters to the Editor

Make the beaches of Tinian safe

As a long-term resident of Tinian, it is my pleasure to say that Tinian is becoming brighter day by day than the time when we arrived in 1998. The residents and the government of Tinian have contributed tremendously to develop every field on the island such as in law and regulation, cleaning the major places, constructing the cottages especially in tourist places. I am proud of those activities executed around the island. I would like to express my heartfelt thank to the people of Tinian and the concerned authorities.

However, there are still many things that need to given attention promptly to avoid unpleasant and horrible incidents occurring on the island every now and then.

In my opinion, the beautiful beaches attract our tourists the most. Tinian has always been visited by tourists for leisure purposes. The tourists cannot resist taking full advantage of the clean, beautiful and breathtaking blue water beaches by swimming with families and friends. Local residents also spend most of their leisure time in the beaches swimming and partying.

However, not everyone who visit the beaches are good swimmers. The sea condition is unpredictable and the tide and wave action happen unexpectedly. Most careful swimmer will stop swimming and go to the beach side before the waves grow big and the tide rolls. But sometimes, people become trapped by the big water tide and could not escape the waves. Due to strong waves, many residents and visitors have already lost their lives in the waters in Tachogna and Taga Beaches in front of many spectators. When someone is trapped by the big waves and cannot escape, the friends and other spectators cannot do anything except to watch helplessly. During that time, no one dares to jump into the strong waves and save the victims. No one will put his or her life at risk to save someone's life.

I had been in that situation once in the past and my previous experience encouraged me to draw the attention of concerned authorities. About a few years ago, I witnessed a 10-year-local child was trapped in the water and was begging for help. Although I am not a good swimmer, I helped him out from the water. In this regards, I would like to request concerned authorities to take the necessary precautions to prevent such type of avoidable incidents from happening again.

We can reduce those kinds of incidents by practicing the following recommendations:

1. Appointing lifeguards with necessary equipments at main beaches during those times when there are many people there.

2. During other time, it would be recommended to keep hanging long ropes with floating tubes, wood or plastics things in visible places such as trees and poles. In case of emergency anyone can use those items to save someone's life.

I am optimistic that my recommendations would be taken positively and necessary steps will be taken in order to save innocent victims of the sea. Arranging such things is better than searching for the corpse from helicopters.

Jwahar Lal Rajbansi
Tinian

12-year-old against the ban on fireworks

I am a 12-year-old student who enjoys home fireworks and I'm writing regarding the bill to ban the sale of fireworks. I understand the bill is being passed because children are getting hurt using fireworks and because fireworks have become a nuisance in our community.

But I believe our lawmakers are pursuing the wrong solution to this problem. While this bill may reduce injury, it will also reduce the income of the government. Has the government stopped to think how much money it would lose by eliminating the retail sector of this industry?

The government collects taxes on the importation of fireworks and the business gross revenue tax after the fireworks are sold. The government would lose this revenue by passing this law. Has the government considered other solutions to the problem? If not, I greatly urge them to do so, because it appears to me that hundreds of thousands of dollars would be lost by passing this bill. Not only that, but the government would be obligated to put on a fireworks show to make up for the loss of home fireworks. Alcohol and tobacco harm many more people than fireworks. Instead of banning them, make laws regulating their usage.

A few alternate solutions to this problem that I can see are:

1) Pass a law that says that only those 18 or over can purchase fireworks. Stores could be fined for selling to those under 18.

2) Parents could be required to light fireworks themselves or supervise the children lighting them. They may be fined for not complying.

These solutions would greatly reduce the chances of children being injured, would allow the government to collect taxes on these items, and would still allow families to enjoy the fun of home fireworks.

Cody Race
via e-mail

BEATING

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this area, perhaps by expanding the Orphan Drug Program, which gives companies financial incentives to develop drugs that have a limited market.

But bacteria will continue to outwit medicine, and more rapidly if we fail to curb the overuse of antibiotics. A few doctors have responded to the MRSA alarm by routinely giving patients with any infection one of the few drugs that still kills the superbug. Misuse of a last-line-of-defense antibiotic is almost guaranteed to render it ineffective.

This is more than a medical situation, though. Use of antibiotics is routine on animal farms; they're often mixed into feed to prevent diseases from sweeping through tightly packed quarters. A recent study of Canadian pig farms found that a quarter of the swine were infected with the human strain of MRSA. At minimum, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration should conduct a similar study.

The discovery of antibiotics transformed modern health care. Now the transformation has to revolve around keeping those amazing medicines effective.

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The Weather

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph. with gusts to 30 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph. with gusts to 30 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲81° ▼74°	▲80° ▼75°	▲80° ▼75°	▲82° ▼74°	▲80° ▼74°

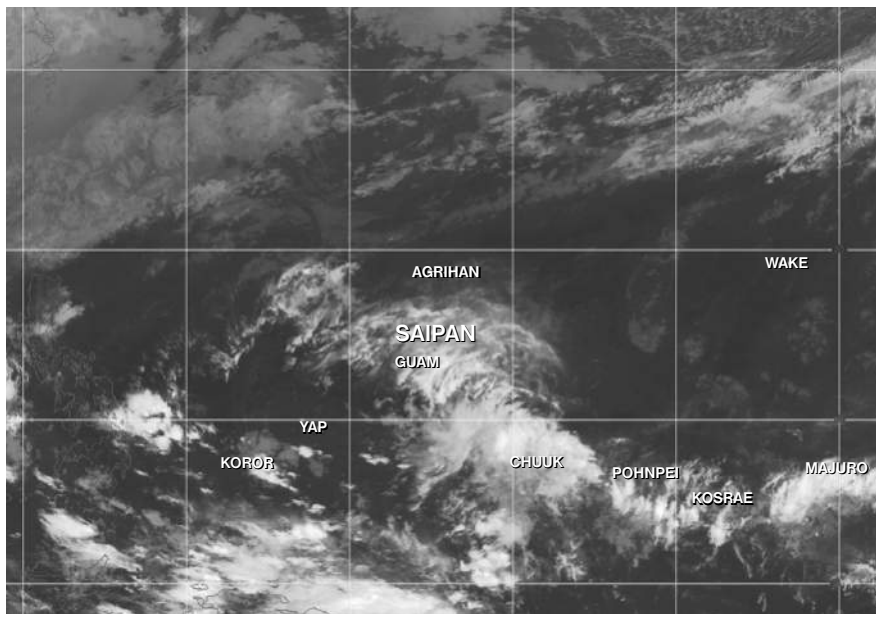
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲89	▼78
Pohnpei	Cloudy	▲85	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼73
Majuro	Showers	▲84	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼66
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲26	▼16
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲63	▼55
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	▲76	▼66
London	Cloudy	▲45	▼37
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲68	▼45
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲80	▼59
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼68
New York	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼30
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼33
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲45	▼37
Pusan	Windy	▲39	▼27
Rome	Showers	▲55	▼40
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲39	▼28
San Francisco	Sunny	▲57	▼43
Seoul	Sunny	▲26	▼15
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲43	▼34
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲46	▼28

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JAN. 15, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers between 6N and 10N from 148E to 155E and between 3N and 7N from 155E to 180. This area covers portions of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae States and the Marshall Islands. A near-equatorial trough extends from 3N130E to EQ152E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms forming along and near the trough can be found south of Palau between the equator and 4N from 130E to 140E and between the equator and 5N from 145E to 150E. Low-level convergence north of the trough is producing scattered showers near Palau between 5N and 9N from 130E to 138E. A cold front enters the discussion area near 25N163E and extends to 23N156E. It continues as a shear line to 19N140E. Areas of low cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles north of this boundary.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

01:19AM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
06:45AM Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
01:02PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
08:30PM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47AM	6:06PM
Thursday	6:47AM	6:07PM
Friday	6:47AM	6:07PM
Saturday	6:47AM	6:08PM
Sunday	6:47AM	6:09PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:02PM	12:06AM
Thursday	12:48PM	01:05AM
Friday	01:40PM	02:07AM
Saturday	02:39PM	03:12AM
Sunday	03:42PM	04:18AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Saipan-Shanghai

MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

Shanghai-Saipan

MU 589	8:05am	3:00am+1	1,5

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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Business

STOCK Portfolio

ASIAN MARKETS

AUSTRALIA 6,021.00 Down 19.90 (-0.33%)	HONG KONG 26,168.47 Down 299.66 (-1.13%)
JAKARTA 2,804.66 Down 5.71 (-0.20%)	TOKYO 14,099.42 Down 11.37 (-0.08%)
K. LUMPUR 1,507.04 Down 9.18 (-0.61%)	MANILA 3,449.41 Down 32.87 (-0.94%)
SINGAPORE 3,220.76 Up 2.62 (+0.08%)	SEOUL 1,739.88 Down 26.00 (-1.47%)
BANGKOK 796.28 Up 5.13 (+0.65%)	

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 12,778.15 +1.36%

NASDAQ 2,478.30 +1.57%

S&P 1,416.25 +1.09%

MONEY MARKET

Australian Dollar	1.1114
British Pound	0.5109
Canadian Dollar	1.0163
Chinese Renmbi	7.2443
Euro	0.6722
Hong Kong Dollar	7.8025
Indian Rupee	39.268
Indonesian Rupiah	9433.5
Japanese Yen	107.83
Malaysian Ringgit	3.2565
New Zealand Dollar	1.2638
Philippine Peso	40.528
Singapore Dollar	1.4295
South Korean Won	935.15
Swiss Franc	1.0903
Taiwan Dollar	32.218
Thailand Baht	29.825

In U.S. dollar terms

Source: Associated Press

Oil prices settle higher on cold weather

NEW YORK (AP)—Oil prices climbed Monday as forecasts for blustery weather nationwide raised expectations that demand for energy will surge in the coming days.

A declining dollar and rising political tensions in the Middle East contributed to the advance, apparently outweighing worries that a weakening U.S. economy could curb oil demand.

Light, sweet crude for February delivery rose $1.51 to settle at $94.20 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. In London, Brent crude gained $1.85 to finish at $92.92 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange.

"The main thrust to the upside is pretty clearly weather driven," said Citigroup Global Markets energy analyst Tim Evans. "That has the natural gas market extending last week's gains and making heating oil the leader on the upside of the petroleum complex."

Heating oil futures added more than 5 cents to settle at $2.5892 a gallon, while natural gas futures gained 14.3 cents to $8.353 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The National Weather Service is calling for below-normal temperatures across most of the country over the next two weeks. The Midwest is the heart of the natural gas market, while the northeastern United States is a major consumer of heating oil.

The falling dollar also helped to buoy oil prices Monday, said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Alaron Trading Corp. in Chicago. The euro rose near its all-time high against the dollar on speculation that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates again.

AP

Tom Stephens, group vice president of global powertrain and quality, shows off the Saturn Vue Green Line Plug-in Hybrid at the North American International Auto Show Monday, Jan. 14, 2008 in Detroit.

Automakers roll out plug-in concepts

DETROIT (AP)—Chrysler LLC on Monday rolled out three plug-in concept cars at the North American International Auto Show, the venue where rival General Motors Corp. made a splash one year ago with its Chevrolet Volt electric concept.

Not to be outdone, GM announced production may begin as soon as 2010 on a plug-in hybrid electric version of the Saturn Vue Green Line, which it expects to be the first regular production plug-in hybrid electric vehicle.

And Toyota said it plans to test hundreds of plug-ins with fleet and commercial customers worldwide by the same year.

It's an electrifying race with many entrants, but one analyst says it's more of a public relations scramble right now for an industry that's lagged on drivers' demand and desires for alternative power.

"The automotive industry is trying to have this green image, but I don't see a true commitment ... where a company is taking a leadership role," said Thilo Koslowski, an automotive analyst for Gartner Inc.

"The concepts trickling down are primarily based on consumers demanding them. ... From the initial perspective, we see a lot of talk about concepts. It doesn't mean you can actually realize those ... for the mass market."

Chrysler's entries in the concept race are Chrysler ecoVoyager, Dodge Zeo and Jeep Renegade. Officials say consumer demand isn't generated solely by technology. It also needs to come with distinctive designs—in other words, no one-size-fits all approach.

Consumer spending slowdown deepens

NEW YORK (AP)—More evidence of a dramatic slowdown in consumer spending surfaced Monday, as Sears Holdings Corp. warned that a drop in sales would result in a profit shortfall and the world's largest retail trade group issued a downbeat sales forecast for 2008.

Shares dropped among retailers from jewelry chain Zales Inc. to Saks Inc., which operates luxury retailer Saks Fifth Avenue, as the spending malaise appeared to deepen and spread beyond lower and middle-income shoppers to more affluent consumers. The decline in retailers' stocks continued a yearlong downward trend.

Consumer spending, which accounts for two-thirds of the nation's economic activity, had been showing resilience even as gas prices rose and the housing market fell. But recent data point to a sharper pullback, a trend that may tip the economy into recession.

American Express Co., whose customers are generally affluent, said Thursday it expects slower spending and more missed payments on credit card bills to hurt its profit throughout 2008. Upscale jewelry retailer Tiffany Co. cut its 2007 profit outlook on Friday as it reported a 2 percent decline in same-store sales, or sales at stores opened at least a year, during the holiday period.

The reports come on the heels of sales reports Thursday by major retailers that showed the weakest holiday period since 2002.

Stocks rally on robust IBM results

NEW YORK (AP)—Wall Street advanced sharply Monday, with solid preliminary results from IBM encouraging investors to go back into the stock market after last week's rout.

International Business Machines Corp., one of the 30 Dow Jones industrials, released preliminary earnings estimates for the fourth quarter that were 24 percent above year-earlier levels. The results also beat the forecast of analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial.

After falling nearly 250 points on Friday, the Dow rose more than 170 points Monday.

"The market was pretty oversold," said Richard E. Cripps, chief market strategist for Stifel Nicolaus. "We were due to bounce back, and the IBM news didn't hurt."

The Dow gained 171.85, or 1.36 percent, to 12,778.15. IBM was the biggest gainer in the Dow, rising $5.26, or 5.4 percent, to $102.93.

Broader stock indicators also rose. The Standard & Poor's 500 index added 15.23, or 1.09 percent, to 1,416.25 and the Nasdaq composite index shot up 38.36, or 1.57 percent, to 2,478.30.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

IBM surprises with exceptional 4Q

BOSTON (AP)—The fourth quarter usually is the best time of the year for IBM Corp., but rarely does it look this good. The technology company said Monday that its earnings per share in the quarter blew past analysts' expectations by 20 cents. IBM's executives felt the numbers were too good to sit on, so they released a peek at the results in advance of Thursday's full report for the quarter. The news sent IBM shares up 5.4 percent, or $5.26, to $102.93 Monday. The results were especially surprising given that economic conditions are not considered favorable. Recessionary fears loom. Hesitation on technology purchases by financial services companies—IBM's largest customer segment—hurt its third-quarter results.

Feds change airport-landing fees policy

WASHINGTON (AP)—Congested airports nationwide can charge landing fees based on the time flights land and traffic volume instead of on the plane's weight, according to a federal policy introduced Monday. U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters said the policy will make it easier for airports to reduce delays by encouraging airlines to spread their flights more evenly throughout the day. Some analysts say while the new fees will encourage competition among airports, consumers ultimately will foot the bill. Airline arrival rates through November were the second worst since comparable data began being collected in 1995, the Transportation Department said earlier this month.

Samsung net profit falls 6.6 percent

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Samsung Electronics Co. said Tuesday that its fourth-quarter net profit fell 6.6 percent amid sharp declines in prices for computer memory chips, though sales of mobile phone handsets surged to a record. Samsung Electronics, the world's largest manufacturer of computer memory chips, earned 2.212 trillion won ($2.36 billion) in the three months that ended Dec. 31, the company said in a statement. Samsung posted net profit of 2.368 trillion won in the same period a year earlier. As the results were being released, South Korea special prosecutors were raiding the Seoul headquarters of Samsung Group, the conglomerate that Samsung Electronics anchors. Investigators are probing allegations by a former Samsung Group lawyer that the conglomerate set up a slush fund to bribe prosecutors, government officials and others. Samsung has denied the allegations.

Nation

3,200 Marines prepare for Afghan tour

WASHINGTON (AP)—About 3,200 Marines are being told to prepare to go to Afghanistan, military officials said Monday, in an effort to boost combat troop levels and get ready for an expected Taliban offensive this spring.

Once complete, the deployment would increase U.S. forces in Afghanistan to as much as 30,000, the highest level since the 2001 invasion after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The military began notifying the Marines and their families over the weekend, as Defense Secretary Robert Gates was expected to sign the formal deployment orders. It was not clear Monday whether the orders had been signed yet.

The proposal went to Gates on Friday, and while he told reporters that afternoon that he had some questions about the move, there has been every indication he was poised to approve it.

According to officials, 2,200 members of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C., will go to Afghanistan, as well as about 1,000 members of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, which is based at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the deployment announcement has not yet been made. If approved, the deployment to southern Afghanistan would be a "one-time, seven-month" assignment, Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell said Friday.

The 2nd Battalion, which is from the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, is an infantry unit, and it will be used largely for training Afghan forces.

The decision to increase U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan represents a shift in Pentagon thinking that has been slowly developing in recent months. Commanders faced with increasing violence have said they need as many as 7,500 more troops, but Gates initially pressed for other NATO nations to fill the void.

NATO countries, however, faced public opposition to deeper involvement there and were slow to respond, leaving Gates to acknowledge recently that the U.S. may have to consider providing the extra combat troops.

Authorities: Reward for Marine suspect

Laurean

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. (AP)—Federal authorities were posting billboards nationwide with the picture of a Marine wanted in the slaying of a pregnant colleague, and the sheriff announced a $25,000 reward Monday for information leading to his arrest.

Authorities are looking for Marine Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean, wanted in the death of Marine Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach, who had accused him of rape. FBI officials said the first billboards with Laurean's photo should be posted Monday in Columbus, Ohio, and Las Vegas.

"The search for Laurean is Earthwide," Onslow County Sheriff Ed Brown said Monday.

Lauterbach's ATM card was found at a bus station in Durham, about 150 miles north west of Jacksonville, and witnesses had reported seeing his black four-door pickup truck in the Raleigh and Durham area, Brown said.

Bark beetles could wipe out Colorado lodgepole

DENVER (AP)—Strands of distressed, red pine trees across northern Colorado and the Front Range are a visible testament to the bark beetle infestation that officials said will kill most of the state's lodgepole pine trees within 5 years.

The infestation that was first detected in 1996 grew by half-million acres last year, bringing the total number of acres attacked by bark beetles to 1.5 million, state and federal forestry officials said Monday.

"This is an unprecedented event," said Rick Cables, Rocky Mountain regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service.

The fire potential will increase as trees retain their needles for a couple of years after beetles attack, said Bob Kane, regional entimologist with the Rocky Mountain Region of the U.S. Forest Service. When the needles fall, the danger will decrease, and spike again when the trees fall in about 10 years, Kane said.

Officials said the infestation has been concentrated in five northern Colorado counties straddling the Continental Divide and has since spread to the Front Range and southern Wyoming. The counties affected are Boulder, Chaffee, Clear Creek, Gilpin, Lake and Larimer counties.

AP

A Mountain Pine beetle or bark beetle is seen on the tip of forester Cal Wettstein's knife during the examination of trees in the White River National Forest near Vail, Colo., in this July 5, 2005 file photo.

WINTER STORM AP

Annabell Lima, a native of Brazil who moved to the Boston area three years ago, stands on the the Swan Boat pier overlooking a the cities snow covered Public Garden lake in Boston, Mass., Monday, Jan. 14, 2008. Nearly a foot of snow fell in Boston and the surrounding areas throughout the day Monday. Many communities declared snow emergencies in advance of the storm and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino ordered only essential city employees to report to work.

Fewer cocaine shipments were stopped in 2007

MIAMI (AP)—U.S.-directed seizures and disruptions of cocaine shipments from Latin America dropped sharply in 2007 from the year before, reflecting in part a successful shift in tactics by drug traffickers to avoid detection at sea, senior American officials disclosed Monday in releasing new figures.

Navy Adm. Jim Stavridis, commander of U.S. Southern Command, which is responsible for U.S. military operations in the region, said seizures fell from 262 metric tons in 2006 to about 210 tons last year.

"It's difficult to say why that is," he said in an interview with three reporters who visited his headquarters with Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who expressed concern at the shift.

The 2007 figure was the lowest since 2003, other officials said. Last year's drop broke a string of yearly increases in cocaine seizures and disruptions dating to the late 1990s. The numbers include estimates of cocaine thrown overboard or scuttled with vessels—a common response by smugglers who are detected at sea.

The biggest dropoff last year was in seizures at sea, which fell from nearly 160 metric tons in 2006 to about 100 metric tons last year, according to the figures, which are preliminary but were described by officials as reliable estimates.

"In any given contest of offense and defense you've got to adjust your tactics," Stavridis said, alluding to a conclusion reached by Mullen and others that the drug cartels are nimbler than the U.S. government.

ACROSS THE NATION

At least 2 killed in Montana avalanche

WHITEFISH, Mont. (AP)—A huge avalanche near Whitefish Mountain Resort killed two backcountry skiers, and searchers combed the area Monday for two other possible victims. Three other people were killed over the weekend in a separate avalanche in Wyoming. Emergency responders were alerted around noon Sunday to the avalanche on Fiberglass Hill, a popular recreation area on the opposite side of the mountain from the Whitefish Mountain Resort. In addition to the two skiers found dead, witnesses were "adamant" that they saw two other people caught up as the snow surged down, Meehan said. But there were no reports of other people missing.

Conflict of interest tanks worker's case

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—For years, Braxton Berkley was exposed to chemicals while helping build top-secret military planes at Lockheed Martin's storied Skunk Works plant. He says those chemicals made him ill—but his case reached a dead end at the state's highest court. The California Supreme Court has refused to hear his appeal not on legal merits, but because four of the seven justices cited a conflict of interest because they controlled stock in oil companies that provided some of the solvents at issue in the case. "It's unfair and I am very disgusted with the courts," said Berkley, who worked at Lockheed during the height of the Cold War and is now a minister in Pacoima, Calif. He suffers from diabetes and arthritis that he says were caused by the chemicals. "A lot of my friends died because of the toxic chemicals we handled."

DC mayor to fire 6 child welfare workers

WASHINGTON (AP)—At least six child welfare workers will be fired for failing to properly address complaints about a woman's care for her four daughters, who were later found dead in their home, the mayor said Monday. The decomposing bodies of the girls—ages 5 to 16—were found Wednesday when deputy U.S. marshals served an eviction notice at the rowhouse. Their mother has been charged with murder. A social worker at the school where the oldest girl was a student tried twice in April to get city agencies to investigate. At a news conference Monday, Mayor Adrian M. Fenty played tapes of two calls the social worker, Kathy Lopes, made after the girl, Brittany Jacks, stopped going to school in March.

Police interview man about dead family

MASON, Ohio (AP)—A man who jumped out of a second-floor window of his burning house and faces murder and arson charges in the deaths of his wife and four children has regained consciousness and talked with investigators, officials said Monday. Investigators wouldn't reveal details of the interviews with Michel Veillette, who remained hospitalized while authorities tried to sort out the Friday night tragedy in this Cincinnati suburb. Veillette, 34, was stabbed, but authorities wouldn't discuss the extent of his injuries or a possible motive. His wife, Nadya Ferrari-Veillette, 33, died of stab wounds. She and the couple's 4-year-old son, Vincent, were found dead at the scene; the other children died at a hospital.

Asia

Thai soldier beheaded, 7 others killed

NARATHIWAT, Thailand (AP)—Suspected Muslim insurgents ambushed an army patrol in Thailand's restive south Monday, killing all eight soldiers and then beheading one of them in a bloody clash as the rebellion enters its fifth year.

An army spokesman called the attack a reaction to what he claimed is the military's progress in tracking down rebel leaders. But it was the second blow for the government in two days, coming after six suspected militants escaped from jail before dawn Sunday.

More than 2,800 people have been killed the past four years in Thailand's southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat and some parts of neighboring Songkhla. Many in the predominantly Muslim area feel unfairly treated by the country's Buddhist majority.

In Monday's attack, the soldiers were on a morning patrol when a bomb hidden on the road exploded and flipped their truck over, an army spokesman, Col. Akara Thiprote, said. The attackers then fired a barrage of bullets, leaving no survivors, he said.

The incident in Chanae district of Narathiwat province was one of the military's worst losses in the past year. Last June, seven soldiers were killed in an ambush along the same road.

An initial investigation indicated about 20 attackers were hiding in the brush along the roadside Monday, police Lt. Col. Chakkrote Nongmanee said.

"One of the soldiers was beheaded. His head was found 50 meters (yards) away from the scene of the attack," Chakkrote said. Akara said it appeared the soldier was already dead when he was beheaded.

More than 30 people have been decaptitated during the insurgency, many of them civilians. The object appears to be to terrorize Buddhists into leaving the region.

The insurgents do not issue public statements, but researchers who have had contact with them believe they seek a separate Islamic state. The region was a sultanate until it was annexed by Thailand in the early 1900s, and most of its Muslim residents are ethnic Malays who have more in common with the people of neighboring Malaysia.

The degree of influence on the insurgents by outside Islamic extremist groups is still debated, though most experts agree the rebellion is home grown—an outgrowth of decades of disenchantment over misrule and discrimination by Thailand's central government.

AP

Sri Lankan soldiers stand guard near an exploded van in Vauvniya, about 230 kilometers(140 miles) north of Colombo, Sri Lanka, Monday, Jan. 14, 2008.

Sri Lanka violence kills 34 persons

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—A wave of pitched battles, bombings and an airstrike killed at least 34 people across northern Sri Lanka, the military said Monday, as a Japanese envoy met with officials to try to stop the raging civil war.

In the latest attack, soldiers thrust into rebel territory in northern Mannar district and captured nine bunkers, killing nine insurgents, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara.

Two soldiers also died in the fighting and 15 more were wounded, he said.

Earlier, a roadside bomb hit a van in the Vavuniya region, just south of the front lines separating government forces from the Tamil Tiger rebels' de facto state in the north, Nanayakkara said.

The passengers, civilian workers with a military escort, were returning from an army base after collecting explosives for use in civilian metal mining, he said.

The civilian driver and two soldiers were killed, while three other soldiers and a civilian were wounded, the military said. The explosives inside the van did not detonate, Nanayakkara said.

The Tigers have been fighting since 1983 for an independent state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority after decades of being marginalized by successive governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. The fighting has killed more than 70,000 people.

Violence has surged since Jan. 3, when the government announced its withdrawal from a 2002 cease-fire that had largely broken down amid two years of renewed fighting. At least 330 people have been killed—310 rebels, 15 troops and five civilians—in that time, according to military figures.

6 killed in attack on luxury Kabul hotel

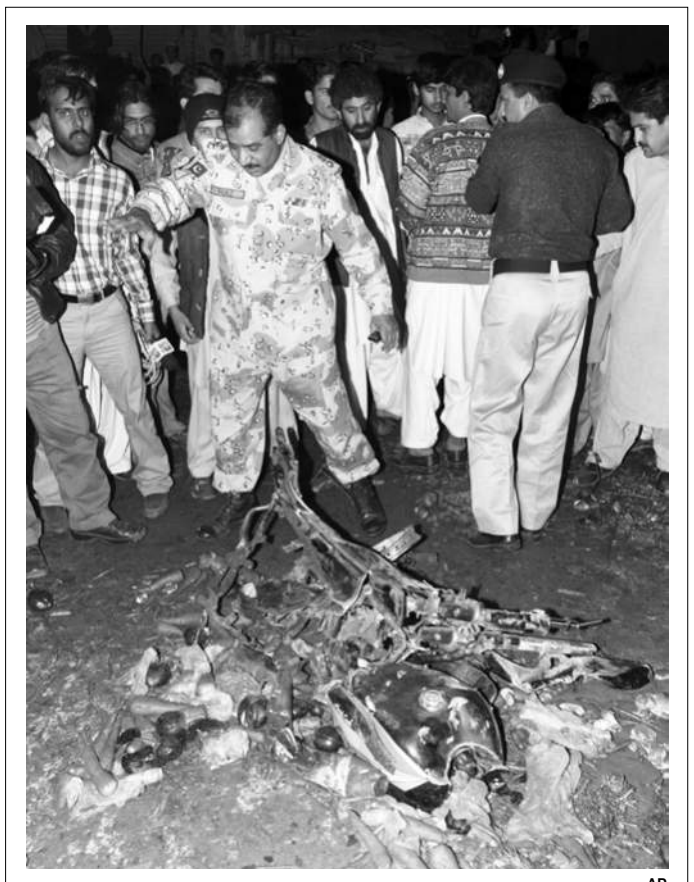
KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Militants with suicide vests, grenades and AK-47 rifles attacked a luxury hotel on Monday, killing at least six people in a brazen attack on Western civilians in Kabul, witnesses and a Taliban spokesman said.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Norwegian foreign minister, who was not hurt, was the target of the assault, which came as the Norwegian embassy was holding a meeting at the Serena Hotel. Two State Department officials said at least one American was among the dead. A Norwegian journalist also died.

It was the deadliest assault on a hotel in Kabul since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The assailants appeared to concentrate on the hotel's gym and spa, where foreigners relax and work out. An American inside said she saw a dead body and pools of blood in the lobby.

The militants killed six people and wounded six, said Interior Ministry spokesman Zemeri Bashary. He spoke before news of the Norwegian journalist's death and it was not clear whether he was counted among the six dead.

One of the attackers was shot to death and the Taliban spokesman said a second died in the suicide explosion.



AP

A Pakistani soldier examines the wreckage of motorbike in which a bomb was planted in Karachi, Pakistan, Monday, Jan. 14, 2008.

Motorbike bomb kills nine in Pakistani city

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—A bomb planted on a motorbike killed at least nine people and wounded 52 others Monday evening in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, officials said.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the blast. Islamic militants have been blamed for a growing number of bloody attacks in Pakistan, but violent crime also plagues this volatile city of 15 million people.

The explosives-rigged motorcycle was parked among fruit in an industrial district.

"I went to deliver a pot of tea to the fruit vendors then suddenly a huge bang pushed me to the wall and things hit me," said Abdul Sattar, 24-year-old waiter at a roadside restaurant.

He cried in pain from burns suffered from the blast. "My face is burning," he said from his hospital bed.

Dr. Seemi Jamali at Jinnah Hospital, one of the Karachi's largest, said nine people had died, including two boys, and at least 52 others were wounded.

After the blast, rioting broke near the scene of the bombing and in another ethnic Pashtun-dominated area of the city. People hurled stones at passing vehicles and set fire to tires. Gunshot was heard but it was not immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the firing.

The unrest comes little more than two weeks after the assassination of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto set off a wave of destruction across the southern province of Sindh, of which Karachi is the capital.

Interior Minister Hamid Nawaz said Monday's bombing was an attempt to disrupt peace in the city after normality had returned. "Perhaps that does not suit some elements .. this is a deplorable incident and very tragic," he said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Doctors amazed Suharto lives on

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Former dictator Suharto developed pneumonia in one lung, doctors reported Monday, calling it a dangerous new threat for a patient with multiple organ failure. They said they were amazed the 86-year-old was still hanging on. Suharto was rushed to a hospital suffering from anemia and a dangerously low heart rate Jan. 4. After initially responding well to a blood transfusion and dialysis, his health sharply deteriorated. Aides said privately he appeared several times to be on the verge of death. The retired five-star general's lungs and kidneys were barely functioning Monday, but his heart showed signs of improvement, said Marjo Subiandono, the chief presidential doctor.

Shanghai residents protest maglev train

SHANGHAI, China (AP)—Protests by Shanghai residents angry over the proposed extension of a high-tech train line forced the government Monday to acknowledge widespread public concern, in the latest standoff between China's communist authorities and middle-class urban Chinese. Hundreds of people defied bans on public demonstrations on Saturday and Sunday over the potential health risks of the showcase project. The crowds staged what they called "strolls" through a busy square and at a popular shopping street to protest extending the magnetic levitation train line.

Nepal Sherpas hold service for Hillary

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—Nepal's Sherpa community held a prayer service in Katmandu on Monday for Sir Edmund Hillary, who conquered Mount Everest and helped thousands of Sherpas living in its foothills by building schools and hospitals. Monks chanted religious verses as mourners draped a khada—a sacred scarf used only in special Tibetan Buddhist ceremonies—over a photograph of Hillary and placed flowers around it. They lit incense and butter-fed lamps in the ceremony at the Boudha, an important Buddhist temple in Nepal's capital, Katmandu. About 200 people attended the ceremony, many of them weeping as they prayed to Buddha.

Taiwan leader takes new tack with allies

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)—Hit by the loss of another diplomatic link, Taiwan's president said Monday that he will try to hold on to remaining allies by encouraging them to open formal trade ties with China while maintaining relations with his island. "You don't need an embassy to do business with China, just a commercial office," President Chen Shui-bian said in an interview with The Associated Press during a stop in Guatemala, one of the few nations that still have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. China has used economic enticements to persuade most countries to cement diplomatic relations with it instead of Taiwan, which has taken an independent course since the two split amid civil war in 1949. Beijing considers the island to be part of China.

World

Gunmen storm Darfur prison, freeing 90

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—Gunmen stormed a Darfur prison, setting free at least 90 detainees, officials and local media said Monday as sporadic violence continued to erupt throughout the western Sudanese region.

A large group of armed men driving pickup trucks overran the prison in the South Darfur town of Buram, injuring two guards, the semiofficial Sudan Media Center and other media reported.

Sudanese police did not comment and would not say who the detainees were and why they were in prison.

But a U.N. official in South Darfur said the attack appeared to have been conducted by fighters from the Salamat tribe of nomadic Arabs, who escaped with several of the detainees also believed to be Salamat. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The Salamat and other Darfur nomadic tribes are among the groups suspected of belonging to the janjaweed, an Arab militia that the Sudanese government is accused of having armed and funded to fight Darfur's ethnic African rebels.

However, several Arab tribes in Darfur have voiced increasing discontent with Sudan's government, at times even turning against it and joining the rebels. Dozens of people have also been killed in recent months as Arab tribes, including the Salamat, turned against one another fighting for war spoils, especially in South Darfur.

More than 200,000 people have died in Darfur and 2.5 million been chased to refugee camps since 2003.

Bush seeks stronger ties with arms deal

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—President Bush delivered a sophisticated weapons sale for Saudi Arabia on Monday, trying to bolster defenses against threats from U.S. adversary Iran and muster support in this oil-rich kingdom for a long-stalled Mideast peace agreement.

On a surprisingly cold day with blustery winds, Bush received a warm embrace from King Abdullah, whose family wields almost absolute rule. Among ordinary Saudis and across much of the Mideast, Bush is unpopular, particularly because of the Iraq war and unflinching U.S. support for Israel.

Bush and Abdullah were going to some lengths over two days to emphasize their strong personal ties.

Saudi Arabia holds the world's largest oil reserves and surging fuel costs are putting a major strain on the troubled U.S. economy. But White House officials said it was unclear if Bush raised the subject with the king. The issue has come up in earlier stops on Bush's eight-day trip, largely in the context of his quest for alternate fuels and sources of energy, the officials said.

White House counselor Ed Gillespie said Mideast leaders have "talked about the nature of the market and the vast demand that's on the world market today for oil." He said that was "a legitimate and accurate point."

Bush, who dislikes late nights, also stayed up well past his regular 9:30 p.m. bedtime for after-dinner talks with the king in the walled compound of his opulent palace. Its marble floors and walls contain sheets of gold, colored with precious stones and embedded jewels.

AP

Saudi King Abdullah, right, examines the King Abdul Aziz Order of Merit on President Bush, left, with after bestowing it upon him following their dinner at Riyadh Palace, Monday, Jan. 14, 2008, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Judge gunned down in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP)—Gunmen assassinated a high-ranking Sunni judge as he headed to work in Baghdad on Monday, the latest of thousands of professionals killed in unsolved cases since the ouster of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003.

Appeals Court Judge Amir Jawdat al-Naeib was slain a week after police arrested a group of militants who specialized in intimidating or killing doctors, academics and judges, according to an Interior Ministry official.

The aim of such attacks is to empty the country of professionals and scientists, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

Under Saddam's Sunni-led regime, members of the now-dissolved Baathist party made up much of Iraq's professional class, including senior bureaucrats who knew how to run ministries, university departments and state companies. After his overthrow, senior Baathists were purged from their jobs, some were assassinated and many fled the country.

A key piece of legislation adopted Sunday by Iraq's parliament would allow thousands of low-ranking former Baathists to return to government jobs. But many former Baathists say they would not take such positions back, fearing Shiite death squads would hunt them down.

Colombian boy's childhood of anguish

EL RETORNO, Colombia (AP)—On April 16, 2004, an urbane lawyer being held hostage in a guerrilla camp deep in the Colombian jungle gave birth to a boy. The child was delivered by Caesarean section performed with a kitchen knife.

Clara Rojas named him Emmanuel—Hebrew for "God is with us"—because she thought of him as a gift from God. The boy was not yet a year old when Rojas' jailers snatched the gift away.

Three years passed before Rojas was freed last week and reunited with her son, and now a portrait is emerging of a childhood odyssey of anguish and hardship for the boy—a tale that for some Colombians symbolizes the heartache of their country's decades-long conflict.

Rojas was kidnapped in February 2002 alongside her boss, presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, joining the ranks of what the government says are 750 captives now held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, Colombia's largest rebel group.

Some time in 2003, Rojas became pregnant. She later said the father was one of her guerrilla captors whom she never saw again, and that he may not know he is the boy's father—if he is alive at all.

Emmanuel's life was marred by trauma from its very beginning. According to Rojas, he suffered a broken arm as a male nurse among the rebels delivered him via Caesarean section, conducted with a kitchen knife and anesthesia. Creature comforts were rudimentary, and Betancourt sewed him clothes from blankets and sang him French lullabies.

AP

This photo released by the Family Welfare Institute, Colombia's child welfare agency, shows Clara Rojas, the hostage released by leftist rebels, with her son at a foster home in Bogota, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008.

The baby developed leishmaniasis, a jungle parasite.

The rebels took Emmanuel from his mother on Jan. 23, 2005.

They handed him over to a peasant, Jose Crisanto Gomez, in the guerrilla stronghold of Guaviare state, a furnace of vast plains and dense tropical forests that is home to seas of coca that fuel Colombia's conflict.

Gomez took the boy to El Retorno, a poor ranching town in a contested region where the army forbids road travel by night. There is a saying here: "The smaller the village, the bigger the hell."

Gomez shared his house, cramped and with a roof of corrugated metal, with his wife, five children, father-in-law and Emmanuel, according to two middle-aged women interviewed last week as they sat in the shade of a tree just down a dirt track.

The women, who gave their names only as Paula and Carolina because they feared retaliation by the rebels, told The Associated Press that Gomez would sit on the porch drinking beer and ignoring the wails of children inside.

Carolina said Gomez, 37, would "buy marijuana and booze, and let his children go hungry."

A social worker, in a report recently released by the government, said the boy was kept locked up alone, without food or drink. No one in the neighborhood had any idea of the child's pedigree.

"I saw that poor little baby boy, but no one knew who he was," Carolina said. "He let the boy's hair grow long and he told us all that it was a baby girl. Can you believe it?"

The AP could not reach Gomez, who is in Bogota with his family under police protection.

He took Emmanuel to a nearby hospital for a checkup in June 2005, saying the boy was his nephew and giving his name as Juan David Gomez. Doctors found the baby's arm still not properly healed, signs of severe malnutrition and symptoms of malaria, in addition to the parasite.

WORLD BRIEFS

EU probes Microsoft again

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—European Union regulators said Monday they were again investigating software giant Microsoft Corp. this time on suspicion of abusing its market position by squeezing out competing Internet browsers and software rivals dependent on Microsoft programs. The European Commission opened two formal probes, the first move against the company since a court four months ago backed the EU in a long-running legal battle over Microsoft's actions in using its ubiquitous Windows operating system to elbow into new software markets. Microsoft said it would cooperate fully with the Commission's investigation and provide any and all information necessary.

Guatemala to swear in new president

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)—Guatemala on Monday swears in Alvaro Colom, its first leftist president in more than 50 years. Colom and his vice president, former Houston Methodist Hospital heart surgeon Rafael Espada, were taking office an afternoon inaugural ceremony that was delayed to accommodate arriving dignitaries. Those attending included at least 10 world leaders, including Mexican President Felipe Calderon, Colombia President Alvaro Uribe and Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez. Speaking to reporters before the ceremony, Chavez said Venezuela was ready to help Colom's new government any way it could, including with oil at preferential terms, investments and other aid.

Mideast peace negotiations inch forward

JERUSALEM (AP)—Palestinian and Israeli negotiators sat down Monday to address their toughest disputes, honoring promises made to President Bush during his visit last week. But talks were undermined by a hawkish Israeli lawmaker's threat to bolt Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's coalition government as he tries to clinch a peace deal. Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Israel's lead negotiator, and chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qureia met Monday for two hours at a Jerusalem hotel, and Israeli officials said such meetings were expected to continue on a more-or-less weekly basis.

Campus Life

VoteGopher.com educates students about issues

By JOSE ANTONIO VARGAS
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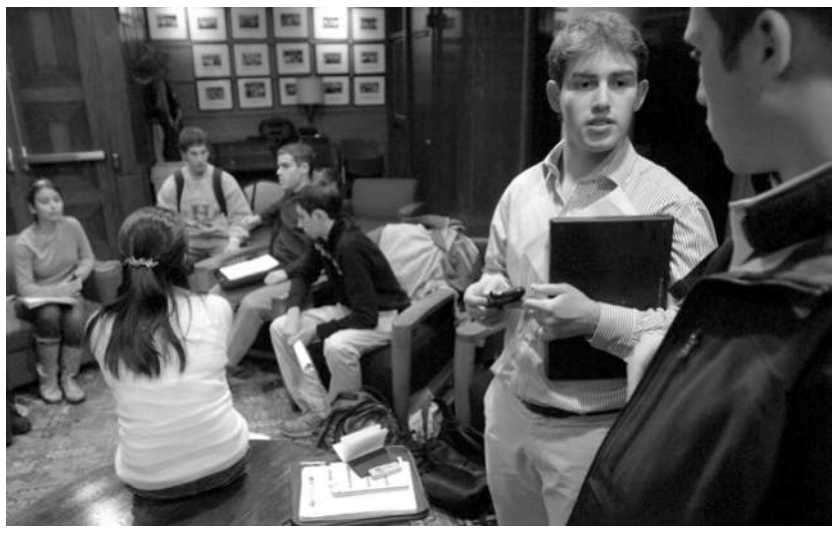


THE WASHINGTON POST
Harvard University student and VoteGopher.com founder Will Ruben, second from right, meets with students who work for the nonpartisan Web site. VoteGopher strives to focus comprehensively and authoritatively on issues facing the candidates.

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—It's "taxing," "daunting," "overwhelming," Eugenia Garcia is saying. So many candidates: five in total, and that's just her Democrats. And so many issues to think about: Iraq, health care, global warming and immigration, the one she cares about most.

But online, where the 21-year-old political junkie follows the presidential campaign, "there's just too much information," she says. "I'm taking this election very seriously. I don't want to make the wrong decision."

Garcia, who's studying politics at Harvard, is living in a tech-savvy, hyper-connected world in which a monsoon of political information rains down on her each day. Four years ago, it was all about blogging, e-mail chains and MeetUp groups. Now add YouTube, Facebook and MySpace, each with its own political hub, and Garcia, already an overstuffed info consumer, faces a perplexing online gumbo. Where to go? What to read? Whom to trust?

On a recent evening inside Quincy House, one of the Harvard dorms, Garcia's making her customary rounds on the Web—skimming through BBC.com ("My parents are from Argentina. I care a lot about Latin American news"), chatting with friends on Skype ("It's an international thing. You can chat and make semi-free long-distance calls")—but also checking out a new political site she heard about from friends: VoteGopher.com. It's created by students for students, or anyone else curious about where candidates stand on the issues. It promises political literacy for young people trying to become educated voters.

Founded by a 20-year-old Harvard sophomore named Will Ruben, VoteGopher strives to focus comprehensively and authoritatively on issues facing the candidates, says Ruben. It's a unique effort to fill an information void for young voters trying to connect with electoral politics.

Former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and Sen. Hillary Clinton, to name just two, have already posted their positions on key issues on their campaign sites. The Des Moines Register and The Washington Post, among other media outlets, track various issues on their online election pages. But VoteGopher features 16 issues. Education, health care and Iraq are of course included. Yet so are rarely addressed topics such as globalization, government reform and business and labor regulations.

The site's motto: "We dig, you decide." Hence the gopher.

Ruben and his staff of 25, most of them Harvard students, read debate transcripts, watch YouTube videos and scour news sites to collect content. Though users can make submissions of their own, such offerings are carefully filtered.

"It's impressive what they've been able to put together," says Lee Rainie, director of the Washington-based Pew Internet & American Life Project. "Back in the pre-Internet era, these students would have just attended town hall meetings, stuffed envelopes, maybe made some phone calls to be involved. These days they're starting their own Web sites."

And if the two previous campaign cycles are any indication—turnout of voters under the age of 30 increased in the 2004 and 2006 elections, says Peter Levine, director of the nonpartisan Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement—this year's election will witness yet another jump in young voter turnout. In Iowa, voters under the age of 30 made up a fifth of Democratic caucus participants.

All of which means, in theory at least, greater demand for comprehensive political information. And accessibility is key to voter engagement, says Carol Darr, former director of George Washington University's Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet.

"Look, why do you think Barack Obama and Ron Paul are raising all that money?" Darr asks. "Yes, they have messages that people are reacting to. But also because contributing money has gotten so much easier because of the Internet. What these students have come up with is an easy way to study the issues."

Yale announces boosts in financial aid

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP)—Yale University said Monday it is joining an expanding group of elite colleges under pressure from parents, lawmakers and alumni to make top schools more affordable to middle-class and upper middle-class families.

The Ivy League school announced what it called the largest increase in financial aid spending in its history, boosting contributions from its endowment by more than $24 million to more than $80 million annually.

The move will reduce the average cost by more than half for families with financial need, Yale officials said.

About 43 percent of Yale's 5,300 undergraduates qualify for financial aid, said spokesman Tom Conroy. Yale's tuition is about $45,000 a year.

"Yale should be a college of choice for the very best and brightest students from across America and around the world, regardless of financial circumstances," Yale President Richard Levin said in a statement. "We want all of our students to make the most of Yale—academically and beyond—without worrying about excessive work hours or debt. Our new financial aid package makes this aspiration a reality."

The changes go into effect in the fall.

In making the announcement Yale joins a group of elite schools—including rival Harvard—in boosting financial aid.

Harvard announced last month that it will provide $20 million more in financial aid. Harvard's tuition, room and board are $45,600 a year.

Duke earlier announced a plan to spend an extra $13 million on aid by capping loans and eliminating any required parental contribution from families earning under $60,000.

The University of Pennsylvania, Pomona, Swarthmore and Haverford all announced they would eliminate loans, more than doubling the small number of schools promising all students a debt-free graduation.

Yale, which has the second biggest endowment in the nation, also announced that it would keep the increase in its tuition, room and board charges in 2008-2009 to the expected level of consumer price inflation of 2.2 percent.

Yale said it is increasing the number of families who qualify for aid, eliminating the need for students to take loans, enhancing its grants to families with more than one child attending college, exempting the first $200,000 of family assets from the assessment of need and increasing expense allowances for foreign students.

Families with incomes less than $120,000 will see their contributions cut by more than 50 percent, while most families with incomes between $120,000 and $200,000 will see cost reductions of 33 percent or more, Yale officials said. Families earning less than $60,000 will not make any contribution, while those earning between $60,000 and $120,000 will typically contribute 1 to 10 percent of family income and families earning more than $120,000 will contribute an average of 10 percent of income.

For example, Yale said, a family with income of $90,000 would contribute $2,950 per year under the new policy, down from $12,550 under the old policy. A family making $180,000 would contribute about $23,000, down from $38,000.

Student contributions would also decline from $4,400 under the old policy to $2,500 under the new policy.

Yale officials announced last week that the school will spend more money from its $22.5 billion endowment in the 2008-2009 academic year on financial aid and scientific research. The university intends to increase the annual endowment payout for such programs by 37 percent to $1.15 billion, Levin said.

Yale's endowment is topped only by Harvard's, which stands at about $34.9 billion.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
SCHOOL OUTING
Students of the non-profit school Saipan American Education Foundation visit with Dr. Jack Tenorio, resident entomologist at the Entomology Laboratory of the Northern Marianas College, last week.

Chicago leads in public military schools

CHICAGO (AP)—Samantha Acevedo stands at attention while the chief yeoman stares her down and orders her to recite the Navy's 5th General Order from memory.

Dressed in a uniform of black pants and a crisp, white button-down shirt, she answers in a near-whisper: "To quit my post only when properly relieved."

She is no raw Navy recruit being put through basic training, but a 15-year-old freshman at Hyman G. Rickover Naval Academy, one of Chicago's five military-style public schools. About 1,800 students in all are enrolled in the schools.

The nation's third-largest district embraced the concept in 1999, and now has more such academies than any other school system in the nation.

The Chicago district runs the academies, and the curriculum is similar to that of regular high schools. But the students are required to enroll in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, operated by the Pentagon, and the regimen includes uniform inspections, drills, and lessons in military history.

School and military officials tout the academies' emphasis on college preparation, discipline and character-building.

"These are positive learning environments. I love the sense of leadership. I love the sense of discipline," said Arne Duncan, chief executive of the Chicago school system.

At Rickover, named for the admiral considered the father of the nuclear submarine, a student "watch" is posted at the entrance, standing attention when the principal passes. Students wear military-style JROTC uniforms and are called "recruits" until they earn the title "cadet." Each class starts with a roll call in which students answer "On board, sir!"

Students at the academies are not required to serve in the military after they graduate. Army Lt. Col. Rick Mills, who is employed by the district to oversee the military academies, said he has no figures on how many of them enlist.

Some critics complain that the military is deliberately trying to recruit poor blacks and Hispanics by setting up academies in a 435,000-student district that is more than 90 percent minority.

"The expansion of the military academies also comes at the time that there's a war going on. I don't believe that's a coincidence," said Darlene Gamigna, a program director for Truth in Recruitment, part of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization committed to pacifism.

Life & Style

Diana's secret safe with loyal butler

LONDON (AP)—Princess Diana's former butler has a secret, but he can't remember what it is.

Paul Burrell, testifying Monday at a coroner's inquest into her death, said the answer might be in a journal he kept but was unwilling to disclose. He later said there was no journal, he never kept one.

He was also most reluctant to say which member of the royal family told Diana she should beware of surveillance, but he did write the name down and pass it to the coroner, Lord Justice Scott Baker. Baker looked at the note, and said it had no relevance to the proceeding.

Later, in an increasingly surreal day, Baker said the surveillance warning did not come from Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip or Sarah, Duchess of York. Burrell's note was given to a court official for safekeeping, and not disclosed.

The upshot was that Burrell was urged to go to his home in Cheshire in northwestern England to retrieve the documents he does have, and lawyers were poised to seek any copies held by Burrell's ghostwriter or his publishers.

Whatever the secret was, Burrell said it had nothing to do with Dodi Fayed, whose death with Diana in a Paris car crash on Aug. 31, 1997, is also a subject of the inquest.

In his book "A Royal Duty," published in 2003, Burrell quoted a note that Diana wrote to him not long before she died. "This coming weekend is an important one," she wrote, and she was touched that he shared her excitement.

AP

Former butler to Britain's Princess Diana's, Paul Burrell, appears during a television taping in New York, USA, Monday Aug. 13, 2007.

"What a secret!" the note said.

What was it? attorney Michael Mansfield asked Burrell.

He wouldn't say. Pressed by Mansfield, Burrell said he knew, but that it "had nothing to do with Dodi Al Fayed."

Later he said, "I cannot remember what that particular secret was."

Burrell said notes of his thoughts and feelings while working with Diana were handed over to ghostwriter Steve Dennis, and then destroyed.

Burrell first told Mansfield, who represents Fayed's father, Mohamed Al Fayed, that he kept a diary.

"As the princess had taught me and as the queen had taught me to keep a diary and to keep a journal, I kept a note of those events because it's part of history and I think that history should be written by those who witnessed, not those who weren't there," Burrell said.

But he resisted Baker's request that he produce the documents.

"My journal and diary, they are intimate and very private and very personal to me and I personally do not think that there is any connection to the circumstances surrounding the princess' death involved in those diaries."

After lunch, Burrell said journal "was not a word I would use," and that he didn't keep one.

"That does seem rather a different picture from the picture you painted earlier," Baker said.

"I am sorry if I misled you, sir, that's my fault. I apologize," Burrell said.

He said he did have notes that Diana sent to him, and also a copy of his sensational note of a conversation with the queen, in which she warned him to be careful. "There are powers at work in this country of which we have no knowledge."

Burrell agreed to retrieve those documents from his home, but wanted to get legal advice before agreeing to disclose them to the inquest.

"Mr. Burrell, will you please set off hotfoot for Cheshire?" Baker said as Monday's hearing closed. Burrell is expected to be back on the stand Tuesday.

Dozens in Texas town report seeing UFO

STEPHENVILLE, Texas (AP)—In this farming community where nightfall usually brings clear, starry skies, residents are abuzz over reported sightings of what many believe is a UFO.

Several dozen people—including a pilot, county constable and business owners—insist they have seen a large silent object with bright lights flying low and fast. Some reported seeing fighter jets chasing it.

"People wonder what in the world it is because this is the Bible Belt, and everyone is afraid it's the end of times," said Steve Allen, a freight company owner and pilot who said the object he saw last week was a mile long and half a mile wide. "It was positively, absolutely nothing from these parts."

AP

Standing near the area where he saw a large silent object in the sky, Ricky Sorrells talks about the sighting, Monday, Jan.14, 2008 in Dublin, Texas.

While federal officials insist there's a logical explanation, locals swear that it was larger, quieter, faster and lower to the ground than an airplane. They also said the object's lights changed configuration, unlike those of a plane. People in several towns who reported seeing it over several weeks have offered similar descriptions of the object.

Machinist Ricky Sorrells said friends made fun of him when he told them he saw a flat, metallic object hovering about 300 feet over a pasture behind his Dublin home. But he decided to come forward after reading similar accounts in the Stephenville Empire-Tribune.

"You hear about big bass or big buck in the area, but this is a different deal," Sorrells said. "It feels good to hear that other people saw something, because that means I'm not crazy."

Sorrells said he has seen the object several times. He said he watched it through his rifle's telescopic lens and described it as very large and without seams, nuts or bolts.

Maj. Karl Lewis, a spokesman for the 301st Fighter Wing at the Joint Reserve Base Naval Air Station in Fort Worth, said no F-16s or other aircraft from his base were in the area the night of Jan. 8, when most people reported the sighting.

Lewis said the object may have been an illusion caused by two commercial airplanes. Lights from the aircraft would seem unusually bright and may appear orange from the setting sun.

"I'm 90 percent sure this was an airliner," Lewis said. "With the sun's angle, it can play tricks on you."

Officials at the region's two Air Force bases—Dyess in Abilene and Sheppard in Wichita Falls—also said none of their aircraft were in the area last week. The Air Force no longer investigates UFOs.

One man has offered a reward for a photograph or videotape of the mysterious object.

About 200 UFO sightings are reported each month, mostly in California, Colorado and Texas, according to the Mutual UFO Network, which plans to go to the 17,000-resident town of Stephenville to investigate.

Fourteen percent of Americans polled last year by The Associated Press and Ipsos say they have seen a UFO.

Erath County Constable Lee Roy Gaitan said that he first saw red glowing lights and then white flashing lights moving fast, but that even with binoculars could not see the object to which the lights were attached.

"I didn't see a flying saucer and I don't know what it was, but it wasn't an airplane, and I've never seen anything like it," Gaitan said. "I think it must be some kind of military craft—at least I hope it was."

MySpace agrees to new safety measures

NEW YORK (AP)—Under mounting pressure from law enforcement and parents, MySpace agreed Monday to take steps to protect youngsters from online sexual predators and bullies, including searching for ways to better verify users' ages.

The hugely popular online hangout will create a task force of industry professionals to watch over its operations, and other social-networking sites will be invited to participate.

"We must keep telling children that they're not just typing into a computer. They're sharing themselves with the world," said North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper.

The deal comes as sites such as MySpace and Facebook have grown exponentially in recent years, with teenagers making up a large part of their membership. This has created a new venue for sexual predators who lie about their age to lure young victims and for cyber bullies who send threatening and anonymous messages.

But Monday's announcement was short on specifics about how improvements would be carried out. Skeptics are doubtful that MySpace and similar sites can eliminate the problem because age-verification technology is difficult to implement and predators are good at circumventing restrictions.

AP

Hemanshu Nigam, right, Chief Security Officer for MySpace, and North Carolina Attorney General Roy Cooper, participate in a news conference in New York on Monday, Jan. 14, 2008.

Parry Aftab, executive director of Wiredsafety.org, a children's Internet safety group, said the agreement was a good first step but could have unforeseen consequences.

"There's no system that will work for age verification without putting kids at risk," she said. "Age verification requires that you have a database of kids and if you do, that database is available to hackers and anyone who can get into it."

Aftab estimates that 20 percent of teens have met someone online that they had never met in person, and there are numerous examples of sexual abuse arising from MySpace encounters.

A 15-year-old girl from Texas was allegedly lured to a meeting, drugged and assaulted in 2006 by an adult MySpace user. In another case, a man got 14 years in prison for using MySpace to set up a sexual encounter with an 11-year-old Connecticut girl. A 16-year-old New York girl ran away to Puerto Rico with a man she met on MySpace.

And a 13-year-old girl in Missouri hanged herself in 2006 after receiving mean messages on MySpace from a person she thought was another teen, but it later turned out that the messages were all a hoax.

The only state not joining the agreement was Texas, where the attorney general said he cannot support the effort unless it takes action to verify people's ages.

"We do not believe that MySpace.com—or any other social-networking site—can adequately protect minors" without an age-verification system, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott said. "We are concerned that our signing the joint statement would be misperceived as an enforcement of the inadequate safety measures."

AP

In this image taken from video and released by TMZ, Britney Spears arrives to court in Los Angeles Monday, Jan. 14, 2008 for her child custody ruling.

Spears leaves before hearing

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears went to a courthouse Monday but abruptly left amid a swarm of paparazzi without attending a hearing in her child-custody battle with her ex-husband, missing a chance to try to persuade a commissioner to restore her visitation rights to her two little boys.

Instead, the Superior Court commissioner heard a day of closed-door testimony from Kevin Federline and witnesses to a bizarre situation this month in which police took the pop singer to a hospital after a standoff in her home when she refused to return the boys to Federline's bodyguard after a visit.

Commissioner Scott Gordon then ruled that a Jan. 4 emergency order suspending her visitation rights and giving custody to Federline would remain in effect. He scheduled another hearing for Feb. 19.

"The word victory is not something Mr. Federline or his counsel would ascribe to this. There is no joy. This is a grave situation for all," Federline's attorney, Mark Vincent Kaplan, said outside the courthouse.

Although Federline thought the ruling was correct, Kaplan said, "his goal, his hope for the future is at some point he will be able to parent the children with the participation of their mother."

Kaplan would not answer questions.

Court spokesman Allan Parachini said those who testified were two Los Angeles police officers; Paula Strong, the court-appointed monitor who was present for the visit at Spears' home; Lisa Hacker, a parenting coach who has been working with Spears and Federline; and Lonnie Jones, the bodyguard.

Parachini did not reveal what the witnesses said during their testimony.

Gordon's order noted that during an officer's testimony there were two exhibits, one described as a photocopy of a police report and the other as a "photocopy of Application for 72-hour Detention for Evaluation and Treatment." All exhibits were ordered sealed.

Neither Spears nor Federline were required to attend, but Federline arrived early, sporting a mohawk-style haircut and dressed in a suit. Spears didn't arrive until early afternoon.

A sport-utility vehicle took her into a civic center garage, but only her attorneys got out before it left. It later stopped outside the courthouse, where Spears got out of a passenger seat and took over the driver's seat. It was not clear in the crush of photographers whether she or a companion was at the wheel when it left.

Gordon scheduled Monday's hearing at the same time he issued a Jan. 4 order suspending Spears' monitored visits with sons Jayden James, 1, and Sean Preston, 2, and giving full legal and physical custody to Federline, who previously had temporary custody.

Gordon issued that order the day after police were called to Spears' home when she refused to return the children to Federline after a monitored visit and officers had paramedics haul the pop star off to a hospital for undisclosed reasons. She was released after a day and a half at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Report: Entertainers in steroid report

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—A number of entertainers were named in connection with an Albany-based steroid investigation, but they are not part of an ongoing criminal probe, according to a published report.

The Times Union of Albany cited unidentified law enforcement officials in reporting Sunday that R&B music star Mary J. Blige, rap musicians 50 Cent, Timbaland and Wyclef Jean, and award-winning author and producer Tyler Perry may have received or used performance-enhancing drugs.

Law enforcement officials have said evidence does not indicate that the celebrities broke the law, but that investigators are focusing on doctors, pharmacists and clinics that provide the drugs.

Albany District Attorney P. David Soares launched the investigation into steroid trafficking last year.

Soares is "not confirming, denying or discussing any of the names" involved in the investigation, said spokeswoman Heather Streeter Orth.

A spokeswoman for Blige denied the singer had taken illegal steroids.

Ken Sunshine, a spokesman for Perry, declined to comment.

There was no response to calls Sunday and Monday seeking comment from representatives of other entertainers.

While athletes use steroids and human growth hormone to get bigger, faster and stronger, the drugs can also lure other people with their supposed anti-aging qualities.

Soares' multistate investigation has focused on Signature Pharmacy of Orlando, Fla. So far, 10 defendants have pleaded guilty and news reports have linked some professional athletes to Soares' probe.

Soares has said Signature was at the center of a web of businesses and doctors that illegally wrote prescriptions for steroids. Authorities raided the company almost a year ago and its owners and operators are awaiting trial in Albany on related charges.

Records shared with the Times Union and information from several cooperating witnesses on Long Island allege the celebrities received prescribed human growth hormone or steroids, the newspaper said.

In Humble Gratitude

†Margarita Sablan Cabrera Tudela

February 29, 1936 — January 01, 2008

We are blessed with God's gift of relatives and friends who have come to be with us to share the mourning of our departed loved one †Margarita.

Your thoughtfulness and unselfish support in expressing your sympathy and condolences have greatly helped us in bearing the sorrow and the pain of our loss.

Our special thanks to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, Fr. Manny Corcuera and the clergy of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa. Our appreciation to Tan Ko Palacios, the altar servers, our techa – Marsha Lourdes Saures, Mr. Antonio Palacios and the St. Jude Choir.

We would also like to thank Dr. Smith, Dr. Chevy and nurses and staff of CHC and the Confraternity of Christian Mothers.

Your prayers during the nightly rosary and the Mass of Christian Burial has lightened the endurance of our pain.

We thank you more than words can express. As you have remembered our beloved in your prayers, we will also remember you in ours.

Thank You – Si Yu'us Ma'ase

Jose Cabrera Tudela
Children and Family

si yu'us ma'ase

With sincere gratitude,
we the family of the late

†Rosa San Nicolas Camacho Borja

Lovingly known as Rosan Chandi

FEBRUARY 25, 1931 - JANUARY 03, 2008

wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to all our relatives, friends, and neighbors for your kind expression of love, sympathy, personal assistance and support during this difficult time of sorrow in the passing of our beloved into the caring hands of our Creator.

We extend our special thanks to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, our pastor Fr. Manny Corcuera, and the clergy of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa who assisted in the Eucharistic Celebration. We thank Tan Ko Palacios and the altar servers for their assistance.

We would also like to thank the techa, and the Confraternity of Christian Mothers.

To all — all who have supported us in one way or another, the many acts of kindness and generosity gave us the strength and courage to endure our great loss — a wife, a loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother — a great "NANG."

For all these — we thank you and God Bless Us All.

Un Dangkulo Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

EUGENIO ARRIOLA BORJA
CHILDREN and FAMILY

Carol Oates leads Book Critics nominees

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Joyce Carol Oates led a field of National Book Critics Circle finalists announced Saturday, with nominations in both fiction and autobiography categories.

Oates was nominated in fiction for "The Gravedigger's Daughter," along with Junot Diaz's "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao," which was passed over for a National Book Award nomination last fall.

Other nominees were Marianne Wiggins' "The Shadow Catcher," Hisham Matar's "In the Country of Men" and Vikram Chandra's "Sacred Games."

Missing from the list was Denis Johnson's "Tree of Smoke," a 600-page journey through the physical, moral and spiritual extremes of the Vietnam War, which captured the National Book Award.

Winners of the 34rd annual National Book Critics Circle prize will be announced March 6 in New York City. There are no cash prizes.

Oates also got a nod for her autobiographical "The Journals" in a relatively new award category. Also nominated were Joshua Clark for "Heart Like Water: Surviving Katrina and Life in Its Disaster Zone," Edwidge Danticat for "Brother, I'm Dying," Sara Paretsky for "Writing in an Age of Silence" and Anna Politkovskaya for "Russian Diary: A Journalist's Final Account of Life, Corruption and Death in Putin's Russia."

In nonfiction, the finalists were Tim Weiner's "Legacy of Ashes: A History of the CIA," which won the National Book Award, as well as Philip Gura's "American Transcendentalism," Daniel Walker Howe's "What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America 1815-1848," Harriet Washington's "Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present," and Alan Weisman's "The World Without Us."

Poetry nods went to Mary Jo Bang for "Elegy," Matthea Harvey for "Modern Life," Michael O'Brien for "Sleeping and Walking," Tom Pickard for "The Ballad of Jamie Allan" and Tadeusz Rozewicz for "New Poems."

Spice Girls attend Cavalli show in Milan

MILAN, Italy (AP)—The Spice Girls pepped up the Milan fashion scene Monday when they turned up at Roberto Cavalli's menswear show to thank him for designing their tour wardrobe.

The tour, which began in December, brings all the Spice Girls together for the first time in nearly 10 years.

"His clothes make you feel sexy," said Geri "Ginger Spice" Halliwell, 35, speaking for the pop stars as they sat backstage chatting with reporters before the show began.

Their glam Cavalli-designed tour outfits are in bright Swarovski-beaded silk and remain true to the playful styles the Spice Girls favored the first time around: miniskirts, cropped tops and body-clinging jumpsuits.

Talking like a gaggle of schoolgirls, they sang the praises of Italian men as "very passionate" and "more stylish" than their British counterparts.

"Italians are stallions," said 32-year-old Melanie "Scary Spice" Brown, summing it up, and quickly adding, "or so I've heard."

The Spice Girls, who also include Victoria "Posh Spice" Beckham, Emma "Baby Spice" Bunton and Melanie "Sporty Spice" Chisholm, said they were enjoying the tour.

"We appreciate everything much more this time around," Halliwell said.

Another Milan favorite, Giorgio Armani, captured "Spice Girls" husband David Beckham for his underwear campaign. Asked what she thought of her husband's supertoned body being displayed in Armani briefs on billboards throughout Milan, 33-year-old Victoria Beckham said: "If I looked like that I'd walk down the street in my panties, too."

AP

The Spice Girls singer Emma Bunton shakes hand with Italian fashion designer Roberto Cavalli at the end of the Roberto Cavalli Fall/Winter 2008/2009 men's collection, presented in Milan, Italy, Monday, Jan.14, 2008.

Snipes' tax fraud trial opens in Ocala

OCALA, Fla. (AP)—Attorneys for Wesley Snipes ticked off more than 70 potential character witnesses, including several celebrities, as jury selection began Monday in the actor's tax fraud and conspiracy trial.

Muhammad Ali, Spike Lee, Tom Brokaw, Barbara Walters, Woody Harrelson, Sylvester Stallone and Gus Van Sant were among the names mentioned.

Snipes

Snipes, 45, and two co-defendants, both known tax protesters, are accused of conspiring to defraud the U.S. of millions of dollars. Snipes allegedly first collaborated with Eddie Ray Kahn and Douglas P. Rosile in 2000, then stopped filing tax returns.

Prosecutors say he fraudulently tried to retrieve $11 million in paid 1996 and 1997 taxes and directed his movie companies to stop withholding taxes from employees.

Snipes, who starred in the "Blade" movies, faces up to 16 years in prison if convicted, while Kahn and Rosile face 10 years.

His case has been delayed twice because of his commitments and the huge volume of paperwork in the case.

Jury selection was expected to conclude Monday, with opening arguments beginning Tuesday.

Snipes had tried unsuccessfully to get his trial moved from this central Florida town, arguing it was racist and he couldn't get a fair hearing. The pool of 37 potential jurors were predominantly white, and Senior Judge William Terrell Hodges moved through them slowly.

Most had heard of the case, but not extensively.

Before court, Snipes appeared at a vigil with the leaders of several predominantly black churches. The pastors followed Snipes to the courthouse and continued to watch when jury selection began.

Producers Guild picks awards nominees

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The crime tale "No Country for Old Men," the historical epic "There Will Be Blood" and the teen-pregnancy comedy "Juno" were among the Producers Guild of America nominees Monday for best film of 2007.

The other nominees were the foreign-language film "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" and the legal drama "Michael Clayton."

In the running for best animated film at the Feb. 2 awards ceremony: "Bee Movie," "Ratatouille" and "The Simpsons Movie."

For documentaries, the Producers Guild nominated Michael Moore's health-care romp "Sicko," along with the Iraq War tale "Body of War," the deafness narrative "Hear and Now," the music chronicle "Pete Seeger: The Power of Song" and the World War II film "White Light/Black Rain: The Destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

Gary Collins checks into Glendale jail

GLENDALE, Calif. (AP)—Gary Collins checked into jail Monday to serve a four-day sentence in his drunken driving case. The 69-year-old TV personality and actor chose to pay an $85 daily fee to stay in the Glendale City Jail instead of the overcrowded Los Angeles County jail, according to the Glendale Police Department.

Collins pleaded no contest Dec. 6 to one misdemeanor count each of driving under the influence and driving with a blood-alcohol content of .08 percent or more in a traffic crash in Sherman Oaks.

He must also serve four years' probation upon his release and pay a $500 fine.

Collins was driving when his sport utility vehicle was struck by another driver. He was not found at fault in the collision, but officers smelled alcohol on his breath.

During the 1980s, Collins hosted the Miss America pageant and TV's "Hour Magazine."

Man feels guilty after hiding truth of teacher's molestation

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am ashamed and angry at myself because I think I have made a mistake that is impossible to correct.

Two detectives came to my home about two years ago to ask me about a teacher I'd had in high school. He was being investigated for molesting boys. I told them, my wife and my parents that nothing had happened to me. In fact, he had molested me for more than two years. He was charged with molesting some boys and taking pictures of them performing sexual acts, but I learned recently that those charges were dropped because of some legal technicality.

One of my friends from high school nearly committed suicide because of what this man did. I feel awful about having lied, and now this man is free to do it to others.

Abby, that teacher took pictures and made movies of me. That's how he made me do things with him. He told me if I didn't, he'd send them to my parents and my friends.

The guilt is killing me. Please tell me what you would do in my situation. Please do not reveal my name or location.

—DIDN'T TELL THE TRUTH

DEAR DIDN'T TELL: There may be a way to correct your mistake. If more men step forward and reveal how this predator molested and blackmailed them, other charges could be filed. Of course, this will require honesty and courage from you and more of his other victims.

Here is what I'd do: I would ask my doctor for a referral to a psychotherapist who specializes in victims of sexual abuse. Then I would contact the district attorney, give an honest statement, and have that office help you locate your classmate who "almost committed suicide" to see if he will finally reveal what happened. It was not his fault, and perhaps knowing that may help him come forward. The crimes that were committed against you both are appalling, and the perpetrator belongs behind bars.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 14-year-old guy in high school. Two of my best friends have started smoking pot before school every morning. They have asked me to join them and "do it just once." I have tried over and over to get them to stop. They say things like, "It's the best feeling in the world," and "It doesn't hurt you at all."

I know for a fact that what they're saying isn't true. But I don't want to lose them as friends. What should I do?

—JUST SAYING NO IN MONTROSE, COLO.

DEAR SAYING NO: I have news for your friends. Smoking pot may seem like it's the "best feeling in the world," and "it won't hurt them at all," but walking into class stoned can be fatal when it comes to paying attention, retaining information and earning passing grades.

Smoking marijuana on a daily basis is the definition of addiction. If used frequently, it has been known to cause users to lose their initiative. ("Why bother to try?") Not only should you not join them, you should quietly inform a responsible adult about what's going on. What your friends are doing is illegal, and their "harmless habit" could prevent them from earning a high school diploma.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am 19, going on 20. My boyfriend, "Alex," is 28. We have been together for about two years and are completely happy together.

The only problem is Alex says he never wants to get married or have kids—ever. I have never pushed the issue, and I don't plan on marriage or kids for a long time. But am I wasting my time going with someone who doesn't want the same things as I do in the end?

—CONFUSED IN OHIO

DEAR CONFUSED: Yes.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

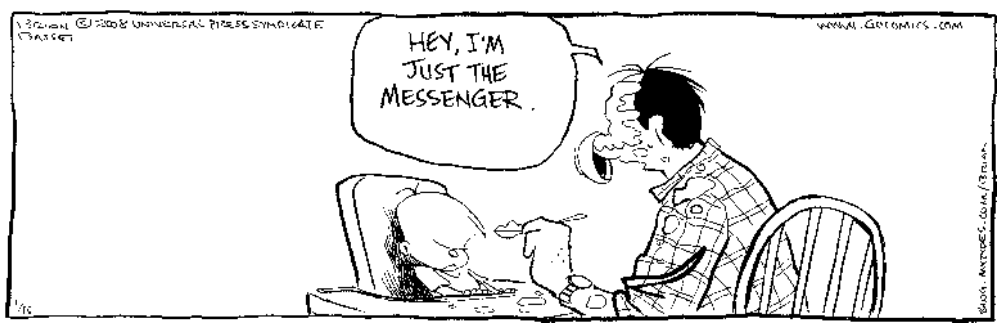
IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU, MAX! IT SEEMS LIKE AGES SINCE YOU'VE BEEN HERE.
I'LL SAY.
I DIDN'T THINK IT HAD BEEN SO LONG, UNTIL I SAW CALVIN. THIS GUY HAS REALLY GROWN.
SO KID, WHAT DO YOU SAY?
I SAY YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR STEP, 'CAUSE I'VE GOT A LIVE, MAN-EATING TIGER AT HOME, AND IF I SO MUCH AS WINK, HE'LL RIP YOUR LUNGS OUT.
CUTE KID, BRO.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

Boy! You DOGS HAVE IT MADE!!
You JUST LIE AROUND ALL DAY! YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING BUT EAT, SLEEP AND SCRATCH YOURSELF!
SOUNDS LIKE YOUR LIFE.
YEAH. BUT I HAVE TO WEAR UNDERWEAR!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

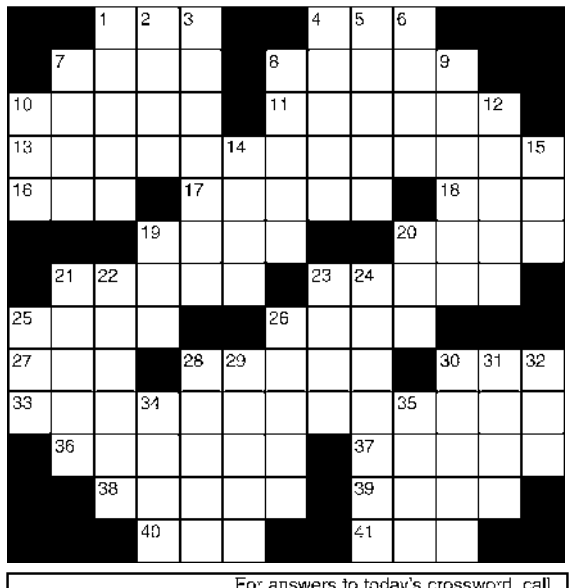
ACROSS
1 Do arithmetic
4 Pop
7 Burn remedy
8 Enticed with trickery
10 Use fishnets
11 Dormant
13 Place for champs
16 Peculiar
17 Mortise's mate
18 Intention
19 Money
20 Mid-month day
21 Fop
23 Writer Joyce Carol —
25 Office fill-in
26 Golden Rule word
27 Ostrich's cousin
28 Group
30 Resort
33 Half a new owner's comment?
36 Tranquilize
37 Teeny bits
38 Cut into cubes
39 Run-down residential area
40 Kennedy or Koppel
41 Swab the decks

DOWN
1 "— flowing with milk and honey"
2 Puzzle direction
3 Took out of context?
4 1970s music genre
5 Now-or-never, in Texas Hold 'Em
6 Antelope's playmate
7 Dry
8 Failed to be
9 Dollar : dime :: century : —
10 Pair
12 Thicknesses
14 Depend (on)
15 Type squares
19 Econ. statistic
20 Judge Lance
21 Showroom samples
22 Entertained
23 Fairy tale starter
24 Disbelief in God
25 Aviv preceder
26 Single
28 Support
29 "Como esta —?"
30 Arrangement
31 Stroller, in Stratford
32 Donkey
34 Tend texts
35 Horse play?

Solution time: 21 mins.

S	H	A	G	■	J	A	B	■	M	A	S	H		
C	A	R	R	■	A	G	O	■	O	L	L	A		
A	L	G	A	■	M	U	S	H	R	O	O	M		
R	O	O	M	K	E	Y	■	O	G	E	E	S		
■	■	■	M	T	S	■	F	L	A	■	■	■		
B	R	A	Y	S	■	K	E	Y	N	O	T	E		
A	I	R	■	■	W	I	Z	■	■	W	O	E		
N	O	T	E	P	A	D	■	C	O	L	O	R		
■	■	■	V	A	N	■	M	O	B	■	■	■		
S	C	O	O	T	■	P	A	D	L	O	C	K		
L	O	C	K	H	A	R	T	■	O	D	I	N		
A	C	H	E	■	S	E	E	■	N	O	N	O		
W	O	O	S	■	S	P	Y	■	G	R	E	W		

Yesterday's answer 1-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kate Moss, 34; Sade, 49; John Carpenter, 60; Dr. Laura Schlessinger, 61

Happy Birthday: Think matters through before you take action. You may not have all the information you need to make a good decision. Be willing to research every aspect of what you want to see happen before you make your move. This is the year to be fully prepared so that you can make the most of the opportunities around you. Your numbers are 7, 13, 20, 25, 32, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't let someone else's emotional trauma bring you down. You have plenty going your way and, if you stop to meddle in other people's problems, you will miss something special. You'll have a passionate approach to whatever you do. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't expect to get help from others when you should be doing the work yourself. Someone from your past may propose something that interests you. A new project can turn into a long-term, profitable venture. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Not everything will be out in the open or made readily available for you to see. Scrutinize what others are doing. A cheerful approach will help you to decipher what everyone around you is up to. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You may not like change but you are overdue. A little effort will result in comfortable surroundings. A good talk with someone you love will lead to a better understanding of one another. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You may feel more like having some fun but you should be focusing on what you can do to get ahead professionally, educationally or financially. The time you spend organizing, planning and manipulating your future will pay off. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Deal with emotional issues quickly and you will spare yourself ongoing problems. Be precise about how you feel and what you expect and you will gain the respect of the people you are dealing with. A new challenge will inspire you. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Put more effort into fixing up your place or looking for a new investment that will help you save. Getting out with friends or family and trying something new will inspire you to do more of the things that you find motivating. A love interest will develop. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Your emotions will be tested today. Not everyone will be forthright regarding intentions and expectations. Instead of letting things get to you, make decisions that will set you apart and help you counteract any form of manipulation. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Get serious about your future. Travel, education and picking up information that can transform your life should be considered. An older or more experienced individual will be able to shed some light on an interesting topic. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Spend time on yourself. If you look good, you will feel good. A property deal or investment can be put into play with the expectation of making a clear profit. A move from one location to another will revitalize you. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Help others and you will help yourself. Taking action will prove that you are capable of being a leader and give you the respect of people who can influence your future. Your charm, electric personality and vision will be all that's required. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't put too much trust into what others say they will do. Unless you have something in writing, it isn't likely to manifest into anything. Offer your time and expertise but don't give cash to a cause you know little about. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are aggressive, forthright and in command. You are capable of getting others to do things for you and can always come up with solutions when needed. You are a leader.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		6	3	1	9	7		
	4						6	
3								
8								
9				5	2	4	3	1
4								2
1								4
	7						8	
		3	5	4	6	1		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 1/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

9	5	3	8	4	7	6	2	1
2	6	8	1	9	5	7	3	4
4	1	7	3	2	6	5	8	9
6	7	1	5	3	8	9	4	2
8	2	5	4	7	9	3	1	6
3	9	4	6	1	2	8	5	7
7	3	2	9	8	1	4	6	5
1	4	6	7	5	3	2	9	8
5	8	9	2	6	4	1	7	3

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/5

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CRACKING YOUR KNUCKLES **Solution: 7 letters**

C	L	S	M	D	G	N	I	H	C	T	E	R	T	S
C	A	R	B	O	N	D	I	O	X	I	D	E	D	N
N	R	V	E	M	V	U	T	E	N	D	O	N	S	A
E	O	A	I	T	U	E	O	R	E	L	A	X	W	P
R	I	I	C	T	N	H	M	S	I	H	E	T	O	P
V	V	J	S	K	A	I	T	E	A	N	L	W	L	I
O	A	O	Y	N	N	T	O	B	N	S	G	I	L	N
U	H	I	N	N	E	E	I	P	W	T	G	S	E	G
S	E	N	O	B	E	T	E	O	S	N	I	T	N	R
D	B	T	V	E	K	S	B	S	N	E	W	P	B	I
N	U	S	I	N	C	L	O	O	H	M	S	P	A	P
A	P	O	A	D	E	S	I	O	N	A	L	A	R	I
P	I	N	L	I	N	D	E	X	L	G	R	A	G	N
X	T	H	E	R	A	P	E	U	T	I	C	P	P	K
E	G	E	L	B	I	X	E	L	F	L	U	I	D	Y

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Behaviora., Bend, Carbon dioxide, Cavitation, Crack, Elbows, Expand, Flexible, Fluid, Gases, Grab, Grip, Habit, Hands, Index, Joints, Knees, Ligaments, Loosen, Loud, Movement, Neck, Nervous, Noise, Palm, Pinky, Pointer, Relax, Rings, Sharp, Snapping, Sound, Stretching, Swollen, Synovial, Tendons, Tension, Therapeutic, Thumbs, Twist, Wiggle

Yesterday's Answer: Feathers

Treasury 5 is here! Send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 postage and handling each ($14.20 total each U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 each for each additional volume, to Universal Press Syndicate, Attn: Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, MO 64111 or call toll-free 1-800-255-0733, ext. 0088. Order online at uclick.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*	
• 1st position	$10
• 2nd position	$3
• Succeeding positions	$1

Combo (Print and Online)*	
• 1st position	$13
• 2nd position	$4
• Succeeding positions	$2

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)	
• Up to 6 positions	$5
• More than 6 positions	$10

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

FOR RENT RESIDENTIAL

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Miriam K. Seman
Manager, Human Resources
Phone: (670) 234-5900 Ext: 274

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

4 FASTFOOD RESTAURANT SUPERVISOR (W 80560)
Salary:$3.75-$6.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; transportation self arranged & workmens compensation. Contact: J.C.A. Inc. dba McDonald's @235-8761.

1 ACCOUNTANT (W 80561)
Salary:$5.00-$10.00/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; workmen's compensation provided & transportation self arranged. Contact: J.C.A. Inc. dba McDonald's @235-8761.

3 FASTFOOD WORKER (W 80562)
Salary:$3.55-$4.25/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; workmen's compensation provided & transportation self arrange. Contact: J.C.A. Inc. dba McDonald's @235-8761.

2 ACCOUNTANT (W 80563)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; self arrange food; workmen's compensation & medical. Contact: OCM (Saipan) Corporation dba Bluehaus/OCM Professionals @233-2862/285-9308.

1 HOUSEWORKER (W 80564)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arrange housing; $100.00/food deduct monthly; surety bond & medical. Contact: Gregory Borja @235-4833.

1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (W 80565)
Salary:$4.05/hour. Benefits: Medical & workman's compensation. Contact: Hugh L. Hargrove dba Landmark Limited @235-3329.

1 PHOTOGRAPHER/MED. SPEC. (W 80566)
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1 BEAUTICIAN (W 80568)
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1 TOURIST-INFORMATION ASSISTANT (W 80569)
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1 NETWORK SYSTEM (MIS OFFICER) ANALYST (W 80570)
Salary:$9.00/hour. Benefits: $225.00/housing; self provided food; life; medical & workmen compensation. Contact: IBSS (CNMI) Corporation @234-5155/8002

1 CIVIL ENGINEER (T 3901)
Salary:$1,200.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Employer provided housing; employee provided food; medical & workmens compensation provided. Contact: Pacific Drilling Ltd. @235-8531.

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6 WAITRESS/WAITER (W 80572)
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1 COOK (W 80573)
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1 HOUSEKEEPING CLEANER (W 80574)
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1 ENGR. TECHNICIAN (W 80575)
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Salary:$3.05-$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self provided housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided. Contact: Asia West Investment Group, Inc. dba Paradise Hotel @234-8224/5/6.

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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (W 80577)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical & workers compensation provided by employer. Contact: Li Yong Hong Corporation dba Hong Apartment Rental @483-9080.

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1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (W 80578)
Salary:$3.55-$4.10/hour. Benefits: Workman's compensation & medical provided. Contact: Pacific Airport Services @235-4000.

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1 CONTROLLER (W 80579)
Salary:$2,600.00/monthly. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; medical; dental & workman's compensation. Contact: Bridge Capital, LLC @322-2222.

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1 HOUSEWORKER (W 80580)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: $100.00/housing; $100.00/food; workmen's compensation & medical provided. Contact: Manuel C. & Zenaida S. Camacho @256-1076.

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1 GEN. MANAGER (W 80581)
Salary:$3.05/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; employee to provide her own transportation to & from the job site; medical & workers compensation company provided. Contact: TKL Ent., Inc. dba New Rise Wholesale @235-5717.

1 PURCHASING AGENT (W 80582)
Salary:$3.55/hour. Benefits: Self arranged housing; self provided food; employer to provide medical expenses & workers compensation. Contact: TKL Enterprises Inc. dba New Rise Wholesale @235-5717.

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1 LIVE-IN HOUSEWORKER (W 80585)
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1 DECK ENGINEER (W 80586)
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2 ELECTRICIAN (W 80589)
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1 TECHNICIAN, A/C AND REF. (W 80590)
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1 ELECTRICIAN (W 80591)
Salary:$5.50-$6.00/hour. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; workers compensation insurance & medical expense. Contact: Chong's Corp. @234-6560.

1 ENGINEER, MECHANICAL (SALES) (W 80592)
Salary:$2,000.00-$2,200.00/monthly. Benefits: Free housing; self provided food; workers compensation insurance & medical expense. Contact: Chong's Corp. @234-6560.

ELEVENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to CMC § 9910(a), the CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that it will be having a Regular Board Meeting at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, January 19, 2008 at BOE Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Retirement Fund Building, Saipan

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
   1. Call to Order
   2. Roll Call
   3. Adoption of Agenda
   4. Adoption of Minutes

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

III. **REPORTS**
   1. Chair Report
      a. SEDC meeting re career educational preparation
      b. SWAT meetings re role of PSS in preparation of local workforce
      c. WIA inquiry re graduation certification
   2. BOE Standing Committee Reports
      a. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (CIA)
      b. Capital Improvement and PSS Property (CIP)
      c. Fiscal, Personnel and Administration (FPA)
      d. Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (LIA)
      e. School Reform and Parent, Teacher and Student Involvement (SPS)
   3. Commissioner of Education Report
      a. Head Start Program
      b. Fiscal Matters
      c. Child Care Program
      d. Special Education Program
      e. Budget update
      f. Other Matters
   4. Teacher Representative
   5. Non-Public School Representative

IV. **OLD BUSINESS**

V. **NEW BUSINESS**
   1. Approval Head Start Director
   2. Approval Amend Certification and Classification for Head Start Instructor
   3. Approval of Counselors & Others Pay Schedules
   4. Amendments to BOE Bylaws
   5. Resolution recognizing Tan Holdings Company's contribution to education
   6. Lease of PSS office space at Retirement Fund Building
   7. NMC BOR – BOE Collaboration efforts
   8. Hiring BOE Staff

VI. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**[1]
   1. Legal Matters
   2. Personnel Matters
   3. Other Matters

VII. **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

[1]Pursuant to CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time. For more information contact the Board Office at Tel. No. 237-3010 or Fax No. 664-3711.

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Place: PTI Parking Lot Susupe
When: January 18, 2008 [Friday]
Time: 5:00 p.m.

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Djokovic wins opener at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Novak Djokovic gives a different kind of impression on the court. Most players have been asked for their impression of the new, blue Plexicushion courts at Melbourne Park.

After Djokovic beat Benjamin Becker 6-0, 6-2, 7-6 (5) Tuesday in his first-round match at the Australian Open, the television commentator implored Djokovic to do one of his impressions of another player—specifically Maria Sharapova—that have generated huge attention on YouTube.

At first, he resisted—"I don't want to offend anybody," he said.

But he soon gave in and did a reasonable imitation, right down to the Russian player's tendency to brush strands of her long blonde hair back over her ears as she prepares to serve.

The crowd gave him a standing ovation, and Djokovic later assured a news conference that Sharapova "doesn't mind" the impersonations.

"She's OK with it," he said.

There was proof at the U.S. Open, when Sharapova showed up to root for Djokovic in the final a few days after he imitated her at that tournament.

Third-ranked Djokovic raced through the first set in just 22 minutes, generating sympathy for underdog Becker, who couldn't seem to find anything that worked and won only three points on his serve.

About the only pain that Djokovic suffered early was self-inflicted. He had to call for the trainer after the fifth game to treat a small cut on his left knee from hitting himself with his racket.

Becker, looking increasingly disconsolate and frustrated, got a loud ovation when he held to win his first game. But Djokovic ran off the last four games of the second set.

The third set turned into a struggle.

"I lost my momentum," Djokovic said. "I almost lost that third set, then who knows what would happen?"

Becker broke for the first and only time in the first game at love on a rash of Djokovic errors. Djokovic leveled the set at 2-all when Becker double-faulted on break point.

Becker won the first three points of the tie-breaker. He got an ace on a challenge of a line call to make it 5-5, but sent two forehands wide to finish the match.

The loss continued a stretch of five consecutive first-round exits at Grand Slams for Becker since his upset over Andre Agassi in the fourth round at the 2006 U.S. Open—the last match of Agassi's career.

No. 10-seeded David Nalbandian recovered from back spasms that forced him out of the Kooyong exhibition last week to beat Australian Robert Smeets 6-1, 6-1, 7-6 (3).

Marcos Baghdatis, the 2006 runner-up, beat 2002 champion Thomas Johansson 7-6 (0), 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 and Amer Delic beat fellow American Robert Kendrick 6-4, 7-5, 6-2.

Other men advancing included No. 21 Juan Monaco of Argentina and No. 25 Fernando Verdasco of Spain.

Second-ranked Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia beat Nathalie Dechy of France 6-3, 6-1 to move into the second round in the women's draw.

Another Russian, No. 6-seeded Anna Chakvetadze, only played six points before advancing to the second round when Germany's Andrea Petkovic retired with a leg injury.

Also progressing were No. 9 Daniela Hantuchova, 6-3, 7-5 over Vania King of the United States; No. 21 Alona Bondarenko; No. 27 Maria Kirilenko, who beat American Meilen Tu 6-4, 4-6, 6-3; No. 31 Sania Mirza of India; and Japan's Akiko Morigami, who beat Michaella Krajicek 6-2, 6-2.

Top-ranked Roger Federer, aiming for a third consecutive Australian title and claiming to be 100 percent recovered from a stomach virus that interrupted his preparation, had a night match scheduled against Diego Hartfield of Argentina.

Venus Williams was to play China's Yan Zi on Rod Laver Arena in the first night match.

Her sister Serena, the defending champion, started off the season's first major with a 6-3, 6-3 win Monday over wild-card entry Jarmila Gajdosova.

It was her first match back at Rod Laver Arena since a 6-1, 6-2 rout of Maria Sharapova in last year's final, when she became only the second unseeded player and third-lowest ranked (81) player to win a Grand Slam title.

"It definitely feels good to be back," Williams said. "I just thought about last year, my last match on that court, I was able to win it.

"That's all I thought about. I didn't think about the ceremony, holding up the trophy. I just got right back into the swing of things and thought, I have to stay focused."

Sharapova had an opening-round 6-4, 6-3 win over Jelena Kostanic Tosic, insisting that her previous match at Melbourne Park was long forgotten.

"You can't think about what you did in the past years," she said. "You can't think about what your results were. You just got to look forward to what's going to come up."

What's coming up for her is a second-round match against 2000 champion Lindsay Davenport, quickly becoming something of a Supermom after holding off Italy's Sara Errani 6-2, 3-6, 7-5.

She lost her temper at the chair umpire on an overrule and worked through bouts of pressure, but had enough experience to extend her record to 19-1 since returning to the tour following the birth of her son, Jagger, last June.

It also made her the richest prize money earner ever in women's tennis, lifting her career tally to $21,897,501 and surpassing Steffi Graf's total.

Top-seeded Justine Henin also was in action Monday, extending her winning streak to 29 matches when she won the last six games of a 6-2, 6-2 victory over Japan's Aiko Nakamura.

On the men's side, No. 2 Rafael Nadal had to recover from service breaks in each of the first two sets to beat Viktor Troicki of Serbia 7-6 (3), 7-5, 6-1 late Monday.

AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Germany's Benjamin Becker during a first round Men's Singles match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008

Mitchell, Selig, Fehr head to Congress

WASHINGTON (AP)—Bud Selig and Donald Fehr return to Capitol Hill on Tuesday, three years after a theatrical hearing where the baseball commissioner and players' union head were chastised for what lawmakers called a lax steroids policy.

Much has changed since then, including a toughening of the sport's drug-testing rules and penalties. But allegations about players' use of performance-enhancing drugs still hound baseball, especially since Roger Clemens was named last month in former Senate majority leader George Mitchell's report on the steroids era.

Mitchell will testify first before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, appearing alone, followed by Selig and Fehr, side by side. Lawmakers can be expected to press all three on recommendations in the Mitchell Report, including a call for the major leagues to bring in an outside anti-doping test agency.

"The aim is to get the report straight from the horse's mouth, Sen. Mitchell," Rep. Tom Davis, who chaired the panel in 2005 and is now the ranking minority member, said Monday in a telephone interview.

"We're going to make news tomorrow. I don't think this is going to just be the stale same-old, same-old. I can't say anything else. There will be some additional things coming out of this. And, of course, we'll hear from Clemens next month."

Unlike on March 17, 2005, Selig and Fehr will not share the spotlight with players. That was the day Mark McGwire repeatedly said, "I'm not here to talk about the past," while Rafael Palmeiro pointed his finger for emphasis and told the committee: "I have never used steroids, period." Palmeiro was suspended by baseball later that year after testing positive for a steroid.

This time, the committee plans a Feb. 13 hearing with Clemens and Andy Pettitte—two of the more than 80 major leaguers named by Mitchell—and their former trainer, Brian McNamee.

Clemens' lawyer met with committee staffers Monday to begin discussing under what format the seven-time Cy Young Award winner might answer questions before testifying under oath next month. The committee wants the witnesses to take depositions.

"We agreed to continuing talking," said Clemens' lawyer, Rusty Hardin. "It was a very pleasant meeting. They were courteous and open-minded."

McNamee told federal prosecutors and Mitchell that he injected Clemens with steroids and human growth hormone; Clemens has repeatedly denied what amounted to the most sensational allegations in the Mitchell Report. Neither Clemens nor McNamee has testified under oath.

"I don't think there's any question that Roger's going to appear before the committee, and that he'll be out there before the full lights, answering questions," Davis said. "It's in everybody's interest that you sit down and talk before that, in one form or another, but we're still discussing that with him."

First things first, though.

It sounds as though Selig has won over some members of the committee by merely asking Mitchell to conduct his investigation—and by beginning to follow some of the report's recommendations, including setting up a permanent branch of the commissioner's office responsible to look into drug use in the sport.

Fehr might expect tougher questioning.

"The players' union needs to be very careful and keep in mind we're talking about the integrity of the game," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, a Maryland Democrat. "If they do not act now, I don't know when they're going to act. We have now been provided with information that says that we do have a problem, some of it systemic."

Management and the union will be pressed about moving testing outside their control.

"That's something we've felt strongly about: "The more independent and transparent the testing authority is, the better the program's going to be," said Phil Schiliro, chief of staff for committee chairman Henry Waxman, a California Democrat.

Schiliro said Fehr and Selig can expect to be questioned about how they would modify baseball's drug policy further.

Representatives indicated Mitchell will be asked about what sort of cooperation he received from players.

"Maybe some of the members will be interested to know how he determined some players were and some players weren't involved. Might be helpful to know that answer," said Rep. Christopher Shays, a Connecticut Republican. "In other words, he named about 80 players. Does that mean the others do not use steroids or that he just doesn't know?"

The committee continues to work on gathering evidence ahead of the Clemens-McNamee hearing.

Davis said the panel has received the full tape of a Jan. 4 telephone conversation between those two men—secretly recorded at the player's end—that Clemens' legal team played at a news conference. The congressman said the committee is working to get a recording of a conversation between McNamee and investigators who work for Clemens' law firm. That took place Dec. 12, a day before the Mitchell Report was released.

Another House committee that scheduled its own hearing on steroids in professional sports announced Monday that the Jan. 23 session would be postponed to accommodate witness schedules.

Wizards rally in fourth quarter to beat Celtics

BOSTON (AP)—Caron Butler scored 21 and Washington beat Boston 88-83 on Monday night for the Wizards' second victory over the Celtics in three days.

Antawn Jamison added 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Wizards, who handed Boston its first two-game losing streak of the season.

Butler scored nine points during a 25-6 run over the final 6:24 of the fourth quarter to give the Wizards their fifth win in the last six games against Boston.

Boston also lost consecutive games at home for the first time all season and dropped to 30-6. The Celtics are 2-3 over their last five and have averaged 85 points a game over that span.

Eddie House scored his only five points of the game to give the Celtics their largest lead at 77-63 with 6:24 remaining before the Wizards rallied.

Trailing by 14, the Wizards went on a 19-4 run to take an 82-81 lead with 40.1 seconds remaining, capped off by Butler's 3-point play.

Kevin Garnett failed on a 3-pointer, but Paul Pierce was fouled on the rebound and sank both free throws to regain the lead for Boston at 83-82. Butler then responded with a high-arcing lay-up as he beat Pierce off the dribble with 19.6 seconds remaining.

Garnett failed on another chance to regain the lead for Boston when his turnaround jumper clanked off the back rim. Butler got the rebound and hit a pair of free throws for an 86-83 lead with 8.3 seconds remaining.

Garnett led the Celtics with 23 points and Pierce added 18.

AP

Washington Wizards' Caron Butler (3) raises his arms with seconds left in the fourth quarter of a basketball game against the Boston Celtics, Monday, Jan. 14, 2008, in Boston.

Trail Blazers 99, Nets 73

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, LaMarcus Aldridge scored 20 points to lead Portland to its 18th win in the last 20 games.

Portland never trailed and got contributions from up and down the lineup. Brandon Roy scored 16 points, Jarrett Jack had 15, Travis Outlaw 13 and James Jones 10.

Joel Przybilla had a game-high 12 rebounds to go along with nine points as Portland rebounded from a 116-109 double-overtime loss to the Raptors in Toronto on Sunday.

Reserve Malik Allen led the Nets with 17. Vince Carter and Jason Kidd each had 10 points.

Spurs 89, 76ers 82

At San Antonio, Manu Ginobili scored 14 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter for the Spurs.

Tim Duncan added 18 points and 16 rebounds and Michael Finley and Tony Parker scored 14 points apiece to give San Antonio its second straight win.

Willie Green led Philadelphia with 21 points and Andre Iguodala scored 19. Samuel Dalembert added 12 points and 20 rebounds for the skidding 76ers, who have lost seven straight.

Ginobili hit four 3-pointers, his only field goals of the game, in the last quarter to help the Spurs pull away.

Jazz 98, Bucks 87

At Salt Lake City, Deron Williams scored 24 of his 33 points in the second half and had 10 assists as Utah rallied to beat Milwaukee.

The Jazz held the Bucks without a field goal for the first 7:25 of the fourth quarter while pulling away for their fourth straight win, Utah's longest streak since November.

Carlos Boozer added 21 points and 10 rebounds and Paul Millsap scored 11 for the Jazz.

Former University of Utah All-American Andrew Bogut had 23 points and 10 rebounds in his return to Salt Lake City, but scored just three points in the fourth quarter as the Bucks' offense fizzled.

Mo Williams added 21 points for the Bucks, who went 0-3 on a Western Conference road trip.

Bobcats 119, Nuggets 116

At Charlotte, North Carolina, Gerald Wallace scored 40 points, Matt Carroll hit two free throws with 4.6 seconds left, and the Bobcats made the big plays down the stretch to beat Denver.

After consecutive heartbreaking losses, in double overtime to Cleveland and in overtime to Detroit, Wallace carried Charlotte in a fast-paced game with numerous dunks and little defense.

Carmelo Anthony had 35 points for Denver. Allen Iverson added 23 points and Marcus Camby had 20 points and 23 rebounds for the Nuggets, who lost for the second time in six games.

Wallace was two points shy of matching his career high. Carroll added 19 points and Emeka Okafor had 19 points and 13 rebounds for Charlotte. Raymond Felton had 15 assists after missing Saturday's loss with a sprained right ankle.

Lakers 123 Sonics 121 (OT)

At Seattle, Kobe Bryant scored 48 points for Los Angeles, and capped his season-best offensive outburst by swishing an 18-footer with 4.3 seconds left in overtime.

Kings 122 Mavericks 120

At Sacramento, Calif., Kevin Martin scored 39 points in his second game back from a groin injury and John Salmons hit a game-winning drive with 2.6 seconds remaining to help the Kings snap Dallas' seven-game winning streak.

Philip Rivers questionable for AFC title game

SAN DIEGO (AP)—The euphoria of the San Diego Chargers' stunning win against the defending Super Bowl champion Indianapolis Colts was replaced by reality Monday.

While two-time NFL rushing champion LaDainian Tomlinson said he should be able to play in Sunday's AFC championship game, the Chargers know quarterback Philip Rivers will be gimpy with a sprained right knee if he's able to play against the undefeated New England Patriots.

Rivers was listed as questionable. He injured his medial collateral ligament when he landed awkwardly after completing a 56-yard screen pass to Darren Sproles for a touchdown on the final play of the third quarter in Sunday's 28-24 upset of the Colts.

Coach Norv Turner compared Rivers' situation with that of tight end Antonio Gates. Gates dislocated his left big toe in a wild-card win over Tennessee, sat out practice all week and then played against the Colts.

"Right now, it's probably questionable in terms of playing in the game, but he's got a chance," Turner said Monday. "That will be a day-to-day thing and we'll monitor it as the week goes on."

Rivers was having tests on the knee and wasn't available to the media. He completed 14 of 19 passes for 264 yards and three touchdowns against the Colts before leaving. Rivers went to the locker room during the game and returned to the sideline with a brace on the knee, but didn't get back in.

Billy Volek took over and led the go-ahead drive, scoring the winning touchdown on a 1-yard sneak.

San Diego had to rely on other backups on Sunday, namely running backs Michael Turner and Darren Sproles.

The Chargers already are huge underdogs against the Patriots, and the injuries won't make it any easier.

"I'm concerned," Turner said. "I mean, I'm real concerned. We're lucky, or we're fortunate, to have a Darren Sproles, have a Michael Turner, have a Brandon McKinney, but you can only withstand so many hits.

"And obviously Billy played great and went in and did the things he had to. But we're getting ready to play the best team in the National Football League. We need to rally the troops and get everyone as healthy as we can be. I've been saying it since August, we want to be at our best. I hope we haven't played our best game yet. That's what we're trying to get done this week."

Rivers sprained his left knee against Tennessee on Dec. 9 and hobbled off the field. He returned and played well in the second half, throwing a touchdown pass to Gates with 9 seconds left to force overtime. The Chargers won it on Tomlinson's TD run.

The Chargers were without Tomlinson for a good deal of the Colts game after he hurt his left knee in the second quarter. He said he expects to play against the Patriots.

"It's nothing serious, just a hyperextension," Tomlinson said. "I think they've got me listed as questionable, but I'm pretty sure I'll be able to play. Obviously, I'm going to do all I can to practice. I don't want to miss any time to practice."

Tomlinson carried only seven times, for 28 yards, and caught one pass for 20 yards. He's rushed for just 70 yards in San Diego's two playoff wins.

Tomlinson and Rivers said on Sunday that they felt they could have gone back in if needed. But Turner said it was a medical decision to keep Tomlinson on the sideline.

McFadden, Jones leaving Arkansas for NFL

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (AP)—Darren McFadden isn't sticking around for another run at the Heisman Trophy. The Arkansas All-American announced Monday he'll skip his senior season and enter the NFL draft.

"When I was growing up, I dreamed of playing for the Razorbacks," McFadden said. "Now, the time has come for me to pursue another dream of mine—playing in the NFL."

McFadden was the Heisman runner-up in 2006 and 2007, so his decision to turn pro wasn't surprising. He ran for 1,830 yards last season, second on the Southeastern Conference's single-season list. He is also second on the career list with 4,590 yards rushing.

Felix Jones, the Razorbacks' other talented tailback, said he'll also enter the draft a year early.

McFadden rushed for over 1,000 yards all three seasons at Arkansas. Jones did it the last two. They were part of a backfield that also included senior fullback Peyton Hillis, another NFL prospect.

Now Arkansas will have to rebuild under new coach Bobby Petrino.

McFadden's decision comes a week after he was involved in a "pretty rowdy scene" at a piano bar in Little Rock, when he was handcuffed by police and then released without charges. In the summer of 2006, he severely injured his toe in a fight outside another club, but recovered in time to play in the season opener.

McFadden holds Arkansas' career and single-season rushing records.

McFadden, from Little Rock, made an immediate impression in 2005. He ran for 1,113 yards and was chosen SEC freshman of the year. In 2006, he led Arkansas on a 10-game winning streak and was second in the Heisman race to Ohio State's Troy Smith.

It was during that season that the Razorbacks began using McFadden in the shotgun at quarterback - he could run, throw or hand off to Jones.

McFadden spoke first at a joint news conference Monday. Then it was Jones' turn.

"I guess that'll be the last handoff from D-Mac," Jones joked.

This season, the Razorbacks lost their first three SEC games but rebounded late. They beat then-No. 1 LSU in the regular-season finale. McFadden ran for 206 yards and three touchdowns and also threw for a touchdown in Arkansas' triple-overtime 50-48 win.

McFadden also tied an SEC record with 321 yards rushing in a November win over South Carolina. He figures to be one of the first players taken in the April draft.

"I just want to go play in the NFL," McFadden said. "Whether I went No. 1 or dead last, it'll be the same feeling for me."

McFadden and Jones join an impressive group of running backs in this year's draft, including Central Florida's Kevin Smith, Michigan's Mike Hart, Rutgers' Ray Rice and West Virginia's Steve Slaton.

UFO to gauge interest in cage league first

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Rather than hold a meeting this week, coordinator Leo Canedo said the United Filipino Organization Basketball League will first gauge the interest of teams that want to take part in the competition.

In a telephone interview, Canedo said teams that want to take part in the 2008 season of the widely popular basketball league should call UFO secretary Olive Yana at 285-7893 to register.

Last week Canedo said that the UFO, the umbrella group of Filipino organizations on Saipan, hopes to revive the UFO Basketball League in late February or early March 2008.

Canedo said like in previous stagings of the league, entry fee is $700 and as many as 12 teams can be accommodated by the organization.

Games likely will be held on weekends with two games slated for Saturday and a triple-header scheduled on Sunday.

Canedo said interested teams must be affiliated with a UFO member organization and are allowed to carry the names of their sponsoring companies as well.

The UFO cage league was last staged in the 2005 season and saw Samahang Ilokano at Pangasinense win its fourth overall championship after besting Cabalen in their best-of-three series.

SIP, led by veteran playmaker Rick Alegre, former national player Edsel Mendoza, and whippet-quick guard Elmer Esdrelon, drew first blood with an 88-79 victory over the Ronald Delos Reyes- and Dalewin Cortez-powered Cabalen in Game 1 in March 5, 2006.

Cabalen bounced back in Game 2 a week later when they forced a third and deciding game following a 99-85 triumph against SIP last March 12, 2006.

SIP sealed the deal in Game 3 when it repulsed Cabalen's late-game heroics in March 19, 2006, to claim the title, 95-86.

SIP won the first three years of the UFO league, 2000-2002; Visminda won the next two, 2003-2004, before SIP returned to the top with the victory in 2005.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
Pete Mendiola of Samahang Ilokano at Pangasinense goes to the basket against a Cabalen defender in Game 2 of their UFO Basketball League best-of-three finals last March 12, 2006, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Sta. Lucia's Omolon fulfills semis dream

MANILA, Philippines— Nelbert Omolon's 40-point performance last Sunday was a result of several motivational factors, foremost of which was Sta. Lucia Realty's first outright semifinal stint in four years.

Omolon said he wanted to be a part of history, thus his impressive performance that earned him the Smart-Accel PBA Press Corps Player of the Week award for the period Jan. 7-13.

The six-foot-four Omolon, whose previous personal-best was 30 markers, went 11-of-16 from the floor and was 4-of-5 from beyond the arc. He added nine rebounds, two assists and a steal in his 36 minutes on the floor.

It marked the first time the Realtors earned an automatic Final Four berth since the format was introduced in the 2004-05 Philippine Cup.

Sta. Lucia beat Air21, 123-106, to join Purefoods in the semifinals.

"Coach Boyet (Fernandez) said we're making history for the team and I just want to be a part of it," said the 27-year-old native of Talakag, Bukidnon.

Omolon was likewise inspired by the fact that he would be playing in his first Philippine Basketball Association semifinal series.

"It would be a best-of-seven affair so it was really a big reward," said Omolon.

The two-time Most Valuable Player in the All-Stars Rookie-Sophomore Blitz Game also did not want to pass up the chance to score 40 points. ***(PDI)***

7th Annual Valentines Walk set on Feb. 9

Saipan Walking Association, Inc. will kick off 2008 with its annual Valentine's Walk on Feb. 9 along the beautiful Saipan Beach Pathway.

According to SAIWAI, the 5- and 10-kilometer walking event is held "in the spirit of Valentine's Day honoring love and lovers while focusing in enhancing the wellness of the heart and physical well-being through non-competitive walking."

Like in the past, the 7th Annual Valentines Walk is sanctioned by IVV and as such SAIWAI and IVV members will receive credit for joining.

IVV has member walking clubs in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Nepal, Australia, New Zealand, the CNMI, and 29 other European countries, including Germany.

For more information about 7th Annual Valentines Walk and SAIWAI's other events for 2008, contact Mario Espeleta at 322-8876, Bea Tenorio at 322-8781, or Hiroko Quitugua at 285-1694. ***(Mark Rabago)***

ULLOA'S

From Page 28

Ol'Aces, known for its gritty plays, kept rallying back in the game and matched Ulloa's intensity in the second half as it nearly pulled off an amazing comeback.

Ol'Aces cut the Ulloa's double-digit lead to six, 71-77, heading into the final quarter.

But two free throws by John Sablan and an outside jumper by brother Josh Sablan pushed the lead back to 10 early in the fourth period.

Ol'Aces answered back with a 14-5 blast to move within one midway in the last canto.

That proved to be Ol'Aces' last hurrah as Ulloa's finished them off with a closing 18-8 salvo, highlighted by consecutive 3-pointers by Dave Palacios.

What added to Ulloa's win was their heads-up defense against Ol'Aces' shooters as they put the cuffs on the usually reliable scoring duo of Elias Saralu and Taj Van Buren.

Josh Sablan scored a season-high 42 points, draining nine of Ulloa's 14 3-pointers. Veteran swingman Dave Sablan added 23 markers, while John Sablan and Henry Sablan chipped in 15 and 13, respectively.

John Santos led the way for Ol'Aces with 31 points with Elias Rangamar ending up with 18 markers.

Saralu and Van Buren were held to 15 each as the duo went cold especially when the team needed them most.

In the second game, Mark Wallace and Fred Pelisamen combined for 36 of Rock Steady's 53 second-half points as they cruised to an 88-63 win over the Bombers.

The Bombers were still in the game after two quarters and were even down by six, 29-35, at halftime.

But Pelisamen went berserk in the third quarter draining baskets from all sides of the floor. Wallace ended what Pelisamen started in the fourth quarter to finally silence the Bombers.

Wallace and Pelisamen wound up with 25 and 23 points, while Sivas Awes and playmaker Andres "Jhun" Estolas Jr. contributed 12 each.

Spencer Johnson paced the Bombers with 21 points, while Richard Brostrom, Bruce Berline, and Ed Palma chipped in 15, 11, and 10 markers, respectively.

The Ol'Aces will face the loser of today's 8:30pm match between the Southern Sonics and Junior Nationals at 7pm on Friday, while the Bombers clash with the loser of the Saipan Stevedore Suns-Runnin'Rebels game.

A loss by Ol'Aces and the Bombers would automatically eliminate them from the playoffs, while a win would allow them to remain alive in the hunt for a finals berth.

First Game

D-1 Ulloa's 104 – J. Sablan 42, D. Sablan 23, Jo. Sablan 15, H. Sablan 13, D. Palacios 6, Yangilmau 4, Tudela 1.

Ol'Aces 93 – Santos 31, Rangamar 18, Saralu 15, Van Buren 15, Celes 9, Renguul 5.

Scoring by quarters: 25-21, 54-40, 77-71, 104-93.

Second Game

Rock Steady 88 – Wallace 25, Pelisamen 23, Awes 12, Estolas 12, Guiab 6, Manibusan 4, Villacrusis 4, Manalili 2.

Bombers 63 – Johnson 21, Brstrom 15, Berline 11, Palma 10, Punzalan 4, Warfield 2.

Scoring by quarters: 15-11, 35-29, 58-41, 88-63.

BOWLERS

From Page 28

taurant claimed the title after narrowly escaping with a 59.5-36.5 win-loss record in the six-month long competition.

SBC/J's Restaurant held on to a .5 lead over runner up Fiesta Resort & Spa, 58.5-37.5. The second and third place teams were also separated by half a point with D'Jar ending the league with a 58.5-40.5 record.

Team No. 1 finished in fourth place with a 55.5-40.5 mark, while Team PTI placed fifth, 54-42.

TAGAMAN

From Page 28

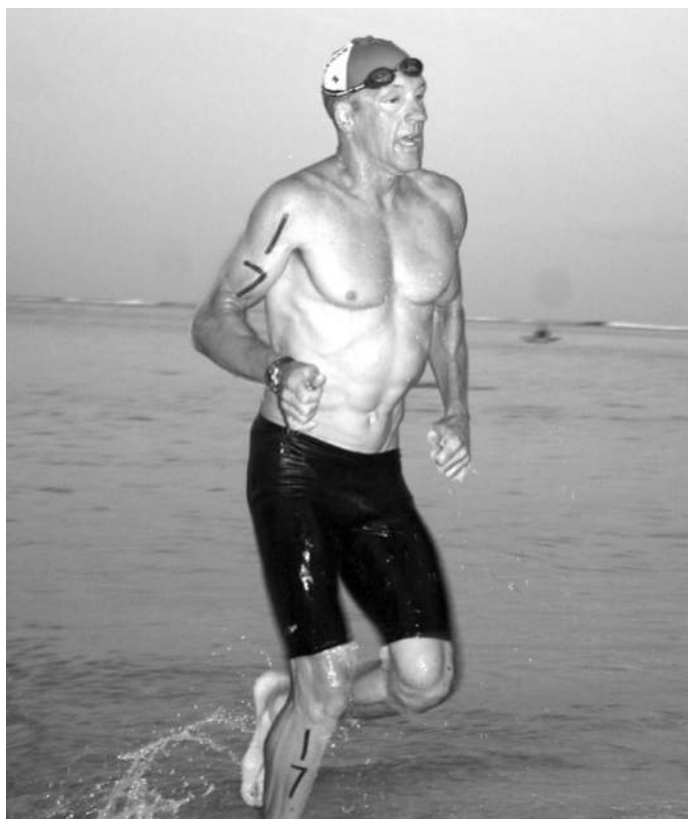
that he won last year.

He placed third in the XTERRA Saipan Championship with a time of two hours, 30 minutes, and 56 seconds behind the 2:27:16 record of Swiss champion Olivier Marceau and Sam Gardner, 2:37:04, of Great Britain.

Noble, a 10-year professional athlete and 1999 U.S. triathlon series champion, bounced back in the Tagaman one week later when he conquered the 2-kilometer swim, 60-km bike, and 15-km run course in 2:54:50.

He also won the 2007 PIC Double with his combined time in the XTERRA and Tagaman (5:34:46) giving him an almost eight-minute lead over closest pursuer Gardner (5:42:58).

For more information and to confirm your participation on Noble's free clinic, email Quinn at dosm@picsaipan.com.



JON PEREZ
Andrew Noble of Australia comes out of the water in the swim leg in this file photo taken during last year's Tagaman Triathlon at the Pacific Islands Club beach.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	30	6	.833	-
Toronto	20	17	.541	10 1/2
New Jersey	18	19	.486	12 1/2
Philadelphia	14	24	.368	17
New York	10	26	.278	20

Southeast Division

Orlando	23	16	.590	-
Washington	20	16	.556	1 1/2
Atlanta	16	17	.485	4
Charlotte	14	23	.378	8
Miami	8	28	.222	13 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	28	10	.737	-
Cleveland	19	18	.514	8 1/2
Indiana	17	22	.436	11 1/2
Chicago	14	21	.400	12 1/2
Milwaukee	15	23	.395	13

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	25	11	.694	-
Dallas	26	12	.684	-
New Orleans	25	12	.676	1/2
Houston	20	18	.526	6
Memphis	10	27	.270	15 1/2

Northwest Division

Portland	23	14	.622	-
Denver	22	14	.611	1/2
Utah	22	17	.564	2
Seattle	9	28	.243	14
Minnesota	5	31	.139	17 1/2

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	26	11	.703	-
Phoenix	26	11	.703	-
Golden State	22	16	.579	4 1/2
Sacramento	15	21	.417	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	10	23	.303	14

Yesterday's Games

Charlotte 119, Denver 116
Washington 88, Boston 83
Portland 99, New Jersey 73
San Antonio 89, Philadelphia 82
Utah 98, Milwaukee 87
Sacramento 122, Dallas 120
L.A. Lakers 123, Seattle 21

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fil-Taga's two-day Golfer of the Year tourney this weekend

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
Fil-Taga director George Sablan hits from the sand trap in this file photo. The club will host its 2007 Golfer of the Year Tournament this weekend.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Fil-Taga Golfers Association will be holding its two-day 2007 Golfer of the Year Tournament this weekend, Jan. 19 and 20, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort east and west courses.

The Golfer of the Year will take home $300 plus championship trophy, while a player who manages to come up with a hole-in-one during the tournament will also pocket $300.

A side event for the tournament is the closest to the pin competition, which pays winners $25 in each of the two par-2 holes.

The monthly champions of 2007 will also each receive handsome trophies as well as $100 in cash.

Tournament director Jun "Tiger" Dela Cruz has set a showtime of 11:30am in the first round on Saturday with tee off set at 12pm. Sunday's schedule, meanwhile, calls for an 11:30am start and an 12pm tee time.

Fil-Taga said Golfer of the Year qualifiers will pay for their own green fees.

Aside from the 2007 Golfer of the Year being disputed next weekend, Fil-Taga's January Ace of the Month Tournament will be held on Jan. 20 simultaneous with the second round of the season-ending competition at the west course.

Fil-Taga's 2007 officers are led by president Jun Dela Cruz Jr., vice-president Jhun Calma, secretary Manny Po, and treasurer Arnaldo Guban.

Its board of directors is made up of Fr. Manny Corcuera, Miguel Cruz, Jr., Ted Malaran, Gil Faller, Rey Ferraz, Greg De Torres, Rene Batallones, Nestor Siruelo, and George Sablan.

Fil-Taga membership dues for 2007 are also due on the second day of the tournament and those who want to enter in the January Ace need to pay 50 percent, or $25 of the fee.

Established in 1993, Fil-Taga's tournaments operate under a computer-controlled handicap system that creates parity among players in the A and B Flights.

A Fil-Taga Ace of the Month champion is crowned monthly. Regular tournaments are scheduled once a month, normally every third Sunday. Green fees are in the $35 to $40 price range for most tournaments.

Men's football league opens this Sunday

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

It will be another busy month for the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association as it is set to open the 2008 season of its men's league on Sunday, Jan. 20, at the Oleai Field inside the Susupe Sports Complex.

JON PEREZ
Fiesta Inter's Arkie Reusora keeps the ball away from an FC Arirang defender in this file photo taken during a game in last season's Men's Football League at the Oleai Field.

Weekends will again be filled with non-stop football action after the Women's Football Committee also began with their boot camp last Saturday, while registration is ongoing for the youth league.

According to NMIFA Men's Football League Committee chair Michael Thomas, games on Sunday will start at 12pm with seven teams competing in the three-month long season for the coveted title.

The men's committee's first league in the 2008 season will end on March 30 culminating with a one-day tournament.

Leading the cast of competing teams are regular fixtures Inter Saipan, PTI, Korean One, and Independents, plus the returning Onwel and Real Mariana squads, and league newcomer Ol'Aces.

Inter Saipan, composed mostly of players from the CNMI Men's National Football Team, dominated last year's Men's Summer Open League where they scored a 3-1 finals win over FC Arirang in the Tapochao Derby.

They completed a four-game sweep of their elimination round matches then cruised to a 6-1 thrashing of the Bangladeshi Sports Club in the semifinals to earn the first championship berth.

Fiesta Inter, however, lost to Onwel in the 2007 Onwel Cup on Nov. 11 but came out on top in last month's Perry Lo tournament.

"Competition this season should again be fierce as most of these teams had low-scoring and exciting battles during the Perry Lo tournament last month," ended Thomas.

Power outage halts APHI-ARC match

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

An unscheduled power outage on Sunday foiled the upset bid of Asia Pacific Hotel Inc. as it halted its game against defending champion Aqua Resort Club at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The lights went out at around 5pm with APHI holding on to a 12-point lead with eight minutes and 56 seconds left in the third quarter.

HANMI Cup Inter-Hotel Basketball League officials decided to suspend the game and will be continued at a later date.

Aqua Resort is currently undefeated after two games while APHI holds a 2-1 record to remain in second place.

APHI zoomed to an early double-digit advantage with their relentless fast-breaking attacks let them enjoy a 30-19 lead after the first quarter and a 53-39 halftime spread.

League organizers also dropped their Thursday schedule after the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association obtained the slot for their indoor volleyball league.

Thus, all games scheduled on succeeding Thursdays will be played following the conclusion of the original regular season date of Feb. 3.

Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands president Elias Rangamar, however, said in a separate interview that they might give the Wednesday schedule to the HANMI Cup once the finals of the 2007 BANMI Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League ends not later than Feb. 4.

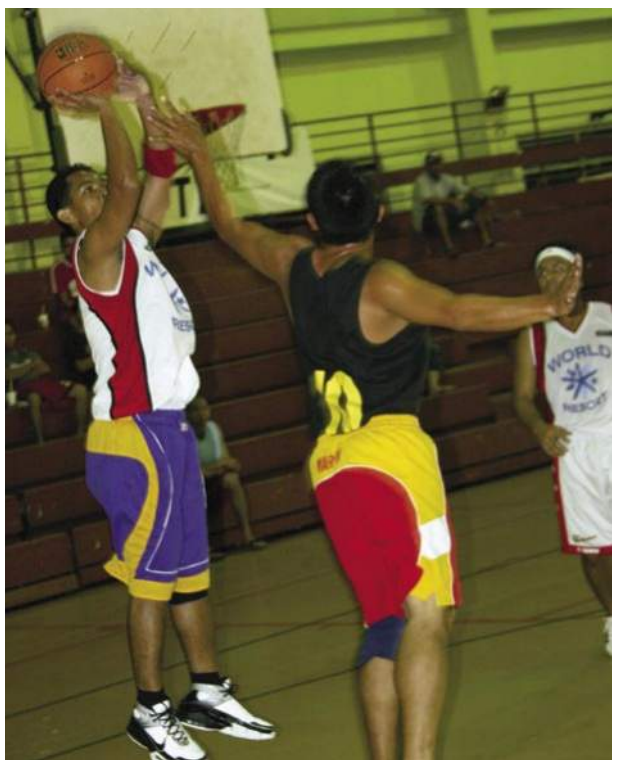
Other participating teams in the 2nd HANMI Cup are last year's finalists Hyatt Regency Saipan, Pacific Islands Club, Hafadai Beach Hotel, Saipan World Resort, and Aquarius Beach Tower.

Three games are being played every Sunday in the HANMI Cup with the first match scheduled at 3pm.

Hyatt was supposed to play against World Resort in the second game last Sunday, while the third match was between PIC and Aquarius.

Titans Chivas Life, Pacific Telecom, Inc., Coca-Cola Bottlers Micronesia, and Western Sales Trading Company sponsor the 2007-2008 season of the HANMI Cup.

League coordinator Lito Espino said each best player of the game has received a Chivas Life bag, PTI phone card, and gift pack courtesy of Coca-Cola.



MARK RABAGO
HANMI Cup-Inter-Hotel Basketball League organizers have dropped their Thursday schedule after the Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association obtained the slot for their indoor volleyball league. Photo above shows Saipan World Resort taking on Aquarius Beach Tower last Thursday.

The league is sanctioned by the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands and is organized by the Northern Marianas Bartenders Association.

In the championship game of the inaugural season held last March 4, Aqua Resort had to sweat it out before completing a perfect season when forward Eric Dalangin scored on a prayer to allow the Achugao establishment to escape Hyatt, 65-63.

For more information about the ongoing league involving the top names of the islands' hospitality industry, call Espino at 323-1135.

NMIFA referees clinic starts Friday

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

With the increasing number of participation in its three leagues, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association will hold another referee training clinic on Friday.

This will be the sixth referee clinic NMIFA will be holding since 2006. NMIFA wants to train new referees in order to keep their numbers and avoid shortage of people officiating the games.

The clinic is free and is welcome to everyone even high school and college students.

NMIFA referee trainer Glenn Smith will be holding the clinic and will be teaching the laws of the game. The clinic begins on Friday with a two-hour classroom session at 6pm at Fiesta Resort & Spa's Azucena Hall.

A similar session will be held on Jan. 25 at the Saipan Grand Hotel and on Feb. 1 back at Fiesta Resort & Spa. Both sessions will start at 6pm.

Feb. 2, Saturday, is reserved for a field training and hands on session with the venue and time to be announced during the classroom sessions.

NMIFA officials are also putting emphasis on referee development since it is also essential for the growth of the game. No experience is necessary to join the clinic.

The new batch of referees who will be trained will join a pool of referees that will officiate in the youth, men, women, and co-ed leagues.

Guam Football Association director of referees George Stewart already conducted three clinics on Saipan, while FIFA World Cup referee Thomson Tam-Sun Chan held a one-day clinic on March 26.

To pre-register in the referee's clinic, email referees director Catherine Perry Anderson at catperryanderson@hotmail.com or call her at 288-8433.

Fil-Taga's two-day Golfer of the Year tourney this weekend

Fil-Taga Golfers Association will be holding its two-day 2007 Golfer of the Year Tournament this weekend, Jan. 19 and 20, at the Laolao Bay Golf Resort east and west courses.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Djokovic wins opener at Australian Open

Novak Djokovic gives a different kind of impression on the court. Most players have been asked for their impression of the new, blue Plexicushion courts at Melbourne Park.

24

Tagaman champ Noble to share skills

By JON PEREZ
jonperez13gmail.com
REPORTER

Tagaman champion Andrew Noble of Australia will hold a free training camp that will impart his experiences and knowledge to new and up-and-coming triathletes upon his return to Saipan this March.

According to triathlon enthusiast and Pacific Islands Club Saipan sales and marketing director Kanae Quinn, the free training camp will take place before the XTERRA Saipan Championship on March 8.

Quinn is advising local triathletes to grab the incredible opportunity that Noble, a former world champion duathlete, would share.

"We would like to know the number of people interested in participating. Based on the level of interest, the training camp will most likely take place [between] March 5 to 7."

Quinn added they would advise all participants of the exact date, time, and venue for the training camp.

Noble, one of the returning professional triahtletes, would like to keep his hold of the Tagaman Triathlon and the PIC Double crowns

See TAGAMAN on Page 26

Moran mighty in Eagle Ray Redux

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Fourteen-year-old Michael Moran topped last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux, finishing the aquatic journey from Pau Pau Beach to Managaha Island in just over two hours.

Moran, who was part of the 15-person group to brave the mid-morning swim, was just short of the course record set by Cooper Graf last Dec. 15. Graf's unofficial time was one hour and 55 minutes.

If there was any consolation to the 8th grade student at Grace Christian Academy though, sea conditions in last weekend's swim were far rougher than last month's Eagle Ray event or any previous Pau Pau-Managaha Island swim, for that matter, according to Saipan Swim Club head coach Michael Stewart.

Moran skipped the Dec. 15 event to prepare for the following weekend's Guam International Meet.

A couple of 50-year-olds—Stewart and Carol Lyn Pierce—also made the swim and were two of the four repeaters from the last month's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim. The other two were Harumi Sugihashi and Maimi Shimizu.

According to Stewart, he and Pierce did not take the All Day 10K to Micro Beach this time and opted to take the short route and ride the boat home to Pau Pau Beach.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Michael Moran nearly broke Cooper Graf's course record by finishing last Saturday's Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux in just over two hours.

Last Saturday's youngest swimmer was 10-year-old Andrew Kimball. Stewart said Kimball was also the youngest swimmer to complete the Bandlin over and Back 5,000m last August and helped him tow the sailboat in last year's Escape from Managaha Island.

Stewart said despite the rough sea conditions, the Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim Redux was quite satisfying.

True to the event's name, Stewart spotted 16 eagle rays. Sugihashi also reportedly saw a small shark, while Stewart and fellow kayaker Laila Qudsi spotted a large sea turtle while paddling their kayaks back from the little island to the big island.

"It was so nice to see such a large turtle in our waters," said Stewart.

The event has been dubbed the Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim because of the preponderance of eagle rays in the route of the swim, which has resulted in the area being called Eagle Ray City by locals and tourists alike.

Stewart said he decided to stage the event again—less than a month after the 2007 swim—for those who missed the previous Eagle Ray 7K Ocean Swim.

Last Dec. 15, 24 swimmers took the plunge with eight of them—Stewart, Graf, Qudsi, Rachel Bandelin, Florian Braig, Pierce, Laura Shevy, and Gary de Guzman—continuing on from Managaha Island to Micro Beach for the All Day 10K.

Ulloa's stuns Ol'Aces, Rock Steady cruises

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

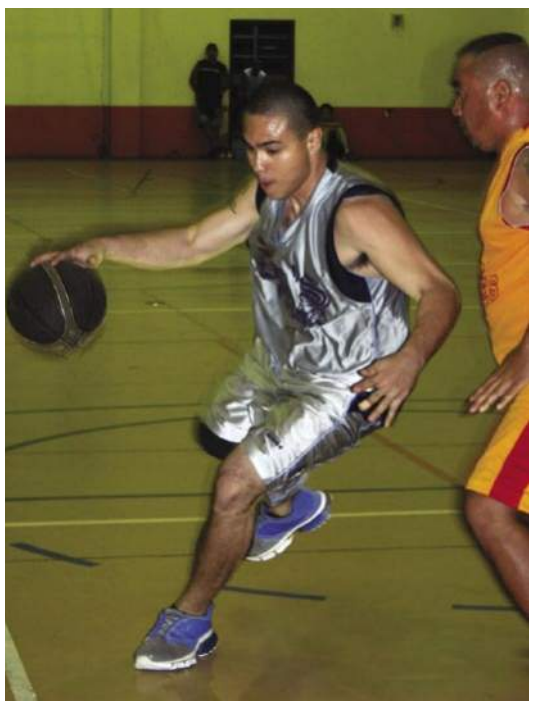
The D-1 Ulloa's played like there was no tomorrow and pushed the top-ranked Ol'Aces to the brink of elimination at the start of the BANMI Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League playoff round Monday night.

Ulloa's treated the game like it was a knockout match, stunning the pennant champions, 104-93, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It was also a revenge of sorts for Ulloa's after Ol'Aces handed them a 96-83 tripping in the elimination round last Dec. 8.

Ol'Aces were also undermanned as they missed the usual scoring of brothers Peter and Abong Camacho, who were both nursing injuries.

They played early in the game but watched helplessly at the sidelines as Ulloa's built an 18-point lead midway in the second quarter before settling for a 54-40 halftime advantage.



JON PEREZ
Henry Sablan, left, of D-1 Ulloa's tries to get past the defense of Ol'Aces' Junior Renguul in their playoff game in the 2007 BANMI-Budweiser Cup Men's Islandwide Basketball League Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

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Bowlers honored Sunday

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Bowlers playing in tournaments and leagues organized by the Saipan Bowling Association and Philippine Bowling Association were honored last Sunday in a banquet held at the Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V.

SBA awarded the winners of their recently concluded King, Queen, and Prince/Princess of the Lanes, while PBA gave out the prizes for the top winners of the 37h PBA-Budweiser Saturday Night League.

Jon Hensley won the King of the Lanes title, while Diane Camacho was crowned the 2007 Queen. Jamie Vales, meanwhile, knocked out the top seeds to claim the Princess tiara.

Joining Hensley in the Top Six were runner-up Ador Dimaano, Raymond Zapanta, Dannie Robles, Kitz Barja, and Raymond Angeles. Gina Sablan placed second to Camacho, while Elena Soll, Ron Cal, Gloria Omechelang, and Emi Williams rounded up the top winners in the women's division.

Jeremy Williams, Zack Cruz, and Raphael Zapanta placed second, third, and fourth in the Prince/Princess of the lanes won by Vales.

Hensley defeated Dimaano, 212-159, to claim the 2007 King of the Lanes title, while Camacho scored a 190-167 triumph over Sablan in the women's division.

Vales, meanwhile, overcame all odds to pull off a 186-163 upset win over Williams in the youth division of the King and Queen of the Lanes.

In the PBA-Budweiser Saturday league, SBC/J's Res-

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JON PEREZ
Saipan Bowling Association president Jerry Tan, from left, joins the winners of the 2007 King of the Lanes during last Sunday's banquet at the Saipan World Resort's Club V. Others in photo are from left, Jon Hensley, Ador Dimaano, Raymond Zapanta, Dannie Robles, Kitz Barja, and Raymond Angeles.

JON PEREZ
Members of SBC/J's Restaurant, from left, Jon Eparwa, Edward Baluyan, Paul Pangelinan, and Robert Talavera pose with their championship and individual trophies during Sunday's banquet of the 37th season of the Philippine Bowling Association-Budweiser Saturday Night League at Saipan Grand Hotel's Club V.